

UNIVERSITY OF TAMPERE

FAR AT HOME

- Finnish Emigrants' Views on Basic Education in Florida

School of Education

Master's Thesis

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The purpose of this research was to explore Finnish emigrants' views on basic education in Florida compared to their experiences in basic education in Finland. Another perspective of this research was to examine what factors do the emigrants believe to have an influence on school success in Florida compared to their experiences in Finland. The third perspective was to find out if the emigrants believe that their immigrant background has any relevance on their children's school success in Florida. The goal of this research was to widen the perspective from only one school system and learning from another system in order to strengthen the understanding of school system's dependency on nations dynamic development. Most of the answerers (n=23) have done studies at the basic education level in Finland and their children are studying or have studied in Florida at the basic education level. Two of the answerers themselves have studied both in Finland and in Florida (n=2).

There were two methods used for collecting the data to enhance the trustworthiness of the research. Out of all 25 answerers (n=25) twenty answerers (n=20) filled an internet based survey and five answerers (n=5) were interviewed in Florida in January 2014. The philosophical approach behind the research is hermeneutic phenomenology. Phenomenology is about the lived experience, but to understand the experiences we need to do interpretations. Understanding is about interpreting and that is the purpose of hermeneutics. Understanding is always built on pre-understanding. The answerers see the differences of these two school systems through their Finnish background and their pre-understanding. Also having to be in a new situation and new environment they are able to see the normal every day life things in a new light when compared to parents who do not have the multicultural background. This approach to the research also brought up an interesting multicultural perspective.

The main findings were that functional issues of school culture in Finland are much more emphasized than in Florida. The importance and positive effect of healthy school food, recesses, arts and physical education, decent amount of homework and free time on school success is understood and much effort and resources are put on them. These issues are less emphasized in Florida. The social issues however; social activity, parental involvement and free time activities are much more emphasized in Florida compared to Finland.

Some aspects behind the school success were seen as worldwide and some cultural. The child's own motivation for studying is one of the factors behind school success in both countries. The culture in Florida values more social aspects: social activity and parents' participation. In Finland students are expected to have more independency. The quality of schools in Florida vary a lot by the area where they are located and therefore the success is dependent on the school and the teacher the student has. In Finland schools are quite the same quality all around the country.

Most answerers believed that their multicultural background has a positive influence on their children's school success. The background was seen as richness when working together with people with different kinds of backgrounds. The Finnish background was seen as an especially positive factor and bilingualism as an advantage when learning new languages.

Keywords: school system, school culture, basic education, school success, multiculturalism, Florida

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

I believe that the school is a crucial part of society for the wealth of the country and for the well being of its citizens. I personally as teacher and as a researcher am interested in an inevitable and dynamic change and development of the society and its direct influence on a school system. We cannot raise and educate our children for today; instead our eyes must be in the future. Multiculturalism and international issues are increasing parts of the modern day politics and school day. Although the international test and measurement systems may be arguable, although the quality and success can be hard or even impossible to define and although not all the means are adoptable in every culture or context; it is essential for the development to shatter the routines and established habits in order to understand if the thing we keep repeating answers to the needs of tomorrow? By my own international experiences I have learned that scrutinizing another country's ways to do things brings up the thoughts and perspectives of my own culture that often have become routinized and concealed.

The aim of this research is to find out what kind of views Finnish emigrants have on basic education in Florida compared to their experiences on basic education in Finland. The answerers themselves have studied in Finland and their children are studying or have studied in Florida. The second research question is what factors do the emigrants believe to have an influence on school success in Florida compared to their experiences in Finland? The third question is do the emigrants believe that their immigrant background has any relevance on their children's school success in Florida? If they do believe so, what sort of relevance does it have? The reason behind this research is to widen the perspective from only one school system and learning from another system in order to strengthen the understanding of school system's dependency on social, national and historical development, in order to raise the thoughts what could be developed? What should be sustained?

In 2010 I got a possibility to familiarize myself to a local preschool in Florida as a voluntary part of my Bachelor's studies. That led me to write my Bachelor's Thesis concerning the quality of the early childhood education in Palm Beach County. During that time the Finnish school success was under a huge public interest in the USA. Doctor Tony Wagner from Harvard University had just visited Finland along with Bob Compton. They produced a documentary called: "Finland Phenomenon: Inside the World's Most Surprising School System." (Wagner & Compton 2011.) The international interest in Finnish school system began after Finland's success in the PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) tests, which have been held every three years since the year 2000. Finland has been ranked to the top until the year 2012. The results tell Finland is still

performing well, but compared to the results and rankings from earlier years Finland's position has never been so low. In these comparisons the USA has been ranked a lot lower than Finland approximately in the average level of OECD countries. (Kupari, Välijärvi, Andersson, Arffman, Nissinen, Puhakka & Vettenranta 2013.) The Finnish success has puzzled the researchers in Finland and also has raised worries for the future. Will the state of high performance last and how can it be assured? At the same time the low ranking in the international comparisons and the drop out rates worry the educators, researchers and policy makers in the USA.

The United States of America (the USA) is a federation of 50 different states. There are over 300 million people living in the USA. (e.g. Geographica 2008, 382–386.) Every state has its own political solutions for organizing the schooling. In addition every state makes its own decisions on how much it emphasizes education by offering resources. (Alexander 2001, 101.) Although the states have a lot of freedom for making their own legislation, the federal legislation is always above the state legislation. (Constitution of the United States.) The basis of the research is examining the Floridian school system through a Finnish perspective. Considering the wideness of the data of the school system in the USA, it is clear that it is not possible to scrutinize the whole school system of the USA as another component. The bigger the difference between two components is the untrustworthier the research is (Gutek 2006, 142). That is why the research is limited to cover only one state that is in this case, Florida. However as explained above some issues are regulated by the federal legislation and thus in some parts inspecting the governmental principles, practices and perspectives is coherent and necessary for the research.

To understand better the contexts where answerers are viewing the school systems from, I will need to explain better the two school systems included the research. First chapter will be presenting the educational policies behind these two systems which are guiding the educational decision-making and educational discussion. Because one of the aims of the research is to find out main factors behind the school success, the definition of the school success is required. After that the history behind the systems is presented in order to clarify the historical and therefore cultural contexts better. The structures, curricula work and basics of teacher education behind the school systems are also presented in brief. The last chapter of theoretical framework behind this research is about multiculturalism. This chapter will explain the multicultural contexts in these two systems and in schooling in general. The methodological aspects are presented after the theoretical framework. This leads us to the analysis and findings, which are discussed more closely after they are presented. The final chapter binds together the main findings of the research and presents the thoughts the research has raised.

## 2 EDUCATION FOR ALL

Like most of the countries in the world, Finland has signed and ratified United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Thus Finnish law states that according to the principle of equality, all discrimination is illegal and all people have an equal right to protection. The USA and Somalia are the only countries, which still have not ratified the Convention. (United Nations Treaty Collection 25.11.2014.) Ratified or not, these articles are a result of international co-operation and consensus and include universal children's rights based on human dignity. In my opinion every teacher and policy maker should be aware of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and create a base of their work, practice and decision-making by the ethics behind the articles.

To mention some articles concerning every day school life, according to the Convention any sort of discrimination by child's or parent's race, skin color, gender, language, religion, political or other opinions, national, ethnic or social origin, wealth, disability, origin of birth or any other matter, is strongly reprehensible (Convention on Rights of the Child 1990, Article 2). Every child has a freedom to express their opinions considering the respect towards others and common morals (Convention on Rights of the Child 1990, Article 13). Thus a child has also a freedom of conscience, thought and religion (Convention on Rights of the Child 1990, Article 14). The country is responsible to encourage international co-operation by media and dissemination of children's books. All the legislative and professional parties including educational professionals are responsible of protecting child from every kind of abuse, physical or mental violence, neglect or maltreatment (Convention on Rights of the Child 1990, Article 19). Every child has a right to receive education and basic education should be compulsory and free. Discipline must be administered by considering the human dignity and conformity (Convention on Rights of the Child 1990, Article 28). All the members of ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities have a right to enjoy their own culture, use their language and practice their religion (Convention on Rights of the Child 1990, Article 30). Also the linguistic needs of minority groups should be taken into consideration (Convention on Rights of the Child 1990, Article 17).

The purpose of the basic education in Finland by the Finnish Basic Education Act is to support pupils' growth of humanity and ethically responsible citizens of the society and to give necessary skills and knowledge for every day life. Education must enhance learning and equality in the society and pupils conditions to participate in education and develop themselves during lifetime. The main principle of basic education is to secure equality within the whole country. (Basic Education Act, 2§.) The 2010 Florida Statutes define the policy and guiding principles behind the

education system in Florida to promote enhanced academic success, to provide consistent education policy throughout the system, to ensure that independent educational institutions and home schooling systems maintain their independence, autonomy and nongovernmental status. The system must be student-centered and equal in every aspect supporting academic excellence and it must maximize the access to high quality education for all Floridians. (The 2010 Florida Statutes 1000.02 (1).) The education system must provide a possibility to enhance students' proficiency by allowing them to expand their knowledge and skills. (The 2010 Florida Statutes 1000.03 (4).) All kind of discrimination is prohibited under penalty and equality must be endorsed (The 2010 Florida Statutes 1000.05 (1)–(7)).

## **2.1 EDUCATIONAL POLICIES**

Especially in the 21st century it has become common that political decision-making of all nations is guided by the aim to succeed in global, capitalistic competition. Supranational expert organizations like the OECD (Organization for Economic and Cultural Development) and the Commission of EU (European Union) have an increasing influence on policy making of individual nations by forwarding unwritten, idealistic views on educational policies. (Silvennoinen, Seppänen, Rinne & Simola 2012, 503.) From the beginning of the 1980's most European countries have followed the neoliberalistic view on education policies. This has led to dismantling the adjustment, decentralization and using market mechanisms to direct public services. The idea of welfare state has been questioned because the public sector is seen too bureaucratic, inefficient and as blocking the economic growth. In many countries education and health care have become a part of market economy. Therefore inspection, control and evaluation have been increased in order to keep a track of the development. Competition, profitability and efficiency are seen as essential factors for the global success. The criticism of neoliberalistic education policies deals with the position of the people with lower socio-economic status, since the polarization enhances the position of the wealthiest part of the population. (Rinne, Järvinen, Tikkanen & Aro 2012, 461–462.) In the USA neoliberalism has been a strong part of the nations' policies since the end of the Cold War (van Apeldoorn & de Graaff 2012, 218).

Disassembling the restrictions of choosing a pleasant school for the child by the parents has become a new phenomenon in the field of educational policies in Europe. The idea behind this phenomenon is to enhance the overall quality of schools, push schools forward to specialize and emphasize their strengths in order to offer parents the possibility to choose the school that suits their

child best and therefore also to create special, high-quality schools for gifted and talented children. Educational level defines social status, income and privileges. The chance for education has always been distributed unevenly. The reforms of educational policies serve people unequally from different social classes. It can be seen that the educational policy emphasizing on freedom to choose the school is originally from the neoliberalistic elite. Even though it sounds that freedom to choose school brings more freedom overall, this change is strongly engaged with the idea of class society. The values and abilities to make decisions vary between families because they depend on families' cultural, social and economic capita. Everybody would have an option to choose, but not all would have the resources to do so. (Silvennoinen, Seppänen, Rinne & Simola 2012, 503–504.)

Finland is counted in among the group of welfare states with high equality education system. However in the past few decades income disparities in both Finland and the USA have strongly increased. In the USA the wealthiest one percent of the population owns two fifths of the whole wealth of the nation. At the same time the amount of people with low income has increased as well. The context and environment where people live with different backgrounds of socio-economic status have causal effect on eating manners, hobbies, health, illnesses and life span. There are also different kinds of relationships of power between people from different socio-economic status. The wealthiest elite has power over the life options of the citizens of low-income status. (Silvennoinen, Seppänen, Rinne & Simola 2012, 505–506.)

When following the discussion in the field of education in the USA, it seems clear that there is a time of change happening right now. The results of international comparisons and the fact that school drop out rates have remained high for decades now, worry educators and policy makers. The opinions on what is the proper way to improve the school system are quite strongly divided. (Maranto & McShane 2012, 1.) There also seems to be significantly different opinions between political parties on what should be the main focus of improving education on school level. Meanwhile the school results of young people especially in history, geography, science, political understanding, literature and foreign languages are getting alarmingly low. (Ravitch 2010, 22, 223.)

President Barack Obama has created his own school reforms. He has also opposed the teachers' unions' support for test-based accountability programs. In the other hand no other president in the USA has ever put so much money and effort in improving the school system. His approaches on reforming the system although have been under huge debate. Many policy makers do not believe that putting that much financial support on education really improves the quality. However as some opinions state that the educational reform is not a current issue only because of the social justice, it is also about the economic growth of the nation. Although some elites believe that academic success is not possible for poor and minority students, the question is how harmful it



would be for nation's economy to waste the talents of poor and minority students? (Maranto & McShane 2012, 1–2.)

Another neoliberalistic belief is the importance of supporting gifted students. The education and support for gifted students have been under discussion in Finland for long time now. Lately the support for gifted students has been in strong demand in Finnish educational discussion. Also the competition between schools has become stronger in Finnish school system and this originates from neoliberalistic views that have a growing effect even on Finnish educational policies. (Rinne, Järvinen, Tikkanen & Aro 2012, 468–472.) Finnish schools are now required certain level of performance and competitiveness. Therefore even though the level of evaluation and inspection is still not the same as in the USA, the direction of educational policies is getting more on the side of neoliberalistic competitive market economy instead of equalistic collective approach that it used to be. (Varjo 2007, 59–60.)

Even though the USA can be seen as following the neoliberalistic policies some innovators state that the governmental public schools still have a too strong monopoly position in the USA and that is harmful for an educational development. Andrew J. Coulson strongly believes on neoliberalistic view that the market economy applied on school system actually gives the best results for academic success. Schools have freedom on creating their own curricula, methods and prices and parents have the right to choose the school they want. When schools compete for customers (students and their families) it sets the goals higher and eventually enhances the quality. (Coulson 2011, 19–21.) Greg Foster states that full school choice for all would be the actual way to an educational equality. The monopoly of public school system is actually discriminative. Public school teachers are tired and bored with the lack of independence and possibilities for innovations. Private school teachers in the other hand are much more satisfied with their working conditions and they have more autonomy in their work. (Foster 2011, 155–165.) C. Bradley Thompson offers his own even stronger view on discussion about educational policies. He claims that it is not justified that the state defines what should be learned and when. Parents should have the right and responsibility to fully decide how the children should be educated. His statement is that school and state should actually be divided and there should not be such thing as children's "right" for education. (Thompson 2011, 150–151.)

## 2.2 DEFINING SCHOOL SUCCESS

Although it is arguable which ideas behind the educational policies are the most important for educational development, both Finland and Florida still promote the students right for free and compulsory education (Basic Education Act & The 2010 Florida Statutes). Also academic success is seen desirable for the wealth of the nation. But how should the school success be defined? What aspects need to be considered? What does great academic success consists of? What would be the best conditions to achieve school success? During the history of Finnish school system there have been lot of attempts to define school success. In the 1920s when education became compulsory, the heterogeneousness of students increased. This brought teachers new challenges on how to encounter the diversity of students. By then it was seen necessary to categorize students in different groups. Different kind of ways to measure and assess were created in order to help the categorization. In the 1930 researchers believed that school success was based on the genes and therefore the success was determined by how talented the parents had been. Grade repetition defined if the student was successful and talented or not. The least successful seemed to be the children with poor socio-economic status. (Vanttaja 2003, 141–144.)

In the 1950s researchers began to notice that stances and attitudes towards education seem to have more relevance in school success. Appreciation and support towards schooling were seen as a bigger influence on school success. After the comprehensive school reform equality became the main idea of school system. It was believed that by overcoming learning difficulties it is possible for everyone to achieve better school success. In the 1980s the research started to focus more on the quality of education and the contextual factors of schools. (Vanttaja 2003, 144–148.)

As stated before, there seems to be a desperate call for change with school system in the USA. Linda Darling-Hammond addresses her worry on the state of the education, how little the school achievement seems to be improving and how much behind the USA is from the top in the international comparisons. (Darling-Hammond 2012, 35.) Linda-Darling Hammond is not the only one noticing the need for change (e.g. Cochran-Smith 2001, Ravitch 2010, Schneider 2011, Wiseman 2012). Ravitch states that the problem with the attempts to reform the school system is that they do not follow a reasonable order. There is a remarkable emphasis on testing and assessment as a way to follow and control the improvement, which leads to punish and reward - system. However the tests are not based on pedagogically well enough established, updated and maintained curriculum or standards. (Ravitch 2010, 16.) What seems to be significant is that there is no consensus among researchers, citizens and policy makers on what is the definition of teacher quality (Akiba & LeTendre 2009, 43).

Although the definition of quality is hard to accomplish, tests for international comparisons are attempted to create. PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) tests show some key features of educational systems of countries with the highest performing students. The most successful school systems seem to be in countries that offer equal possibilities for students to learn regardless of their socio-economic background. Instead the school systems which categorize their students by the level of achievement and performance, tend to be scoring lower. Another important feature is that the most successful school systems give their teachers and schools higher level of autonomy on curricula and assessment. What is significant for higher scores of reading is that, better disciplinary climate, more positive behavior among teachers and better teacher-student relations have an positive effect on rankings. The quality of teaching seems to be having an stronger influence on higher scores than the class-size. (OECD 2010, 13–15.)

PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) is a survey conducted first in 2000 and is repeated every three years. It attempts to assess students' ability, skills and knowledge to confront real-life challenges. Attempt was to specify how able students are in using what they have learned about reading, mathematics and science by the end of the age 15. Students also answer to questionnaires of themselves and their schools in order to gain broader perspective on factors effecting the school success. 65 countries and 34 OECD (Organization for Economic and Cultural Development) countries participated in the PISA in 2012. Finland has been performing extremely well until 2012. Results from 2012 tell that Finland is still performing well, but compared to the results and rankings from earlier years Finland's position has never been so low. On mathematics skills Finland was twelfth. The USA has been ranking every time under the average of OECD countries on mathematics skills. On reading skills Finland was sixth and the USA in the average level of OECD countries. On scientific skills the USA was ranked among the average of the OECD countries and Finland was fifth. (Kupari, Välijärvi, Andersson, Arffman, Nissinen, Puhakka & Vettenranta 2013.) However, it is notable that there are huge differences between different states in the USA. Florida seems to be performing overall on OECD average level, but for example Massachusetts alone would rank much higher than the USA in whole. (National Center of Education Statistics 23.11.2014.)

The Finnish success on earlier PISA surveys has been puzzling the researchers, educators and politicians improving, reforming and maintaining the school system in Finland. Finland has been used to taking examples from abroad and suddenly many other countries' educators and politicians are interested in Finnish way to do educational traditions and decisions. This has lead the researchers taking a serious look on what actually is so spectacular in Finnish comprehensive

school system and what could even be done better for the future. (Välijärvi, Kupari, Linnakylä, Reinikainen, Sulkunen, Törnroos & Arffman 2007, 4.)

There appears to be six leading factors, which are seen as explaining the excellence of the Finnish school system. These are equality, comprehensive school system, teachers' profession and education, early intervention for educational difficulties, self-evaluation of schools and tradition in reading. Students study in free school in diverse classes and there is no categorizing by the level of abilities or achievement. Comprehensive school in Finland is based on the idea of equality. Finnish teachers are required to have a Master's degree and they tend to be highly motivated. Even though the teachers' salaries are low compared to other professions, the profession is highly valued and popular. Learning difficulties are tried to take notice in the early phase and students are getting help as soon as possible. Municipalities are responsible in organizing schooling. Finnish schools are not inspected or evaluated by exterior municipality or government personnel; instead schools are trusted to provide statistics by themselves for the municipalities. Finally, by the amount of Finns borrowing books from libraries, it seems distinctive that Finns love to read. (Saarivirta 2008, 3–7.)

However recent studies show that the stances and motivation of Finnish students for mathematics and reading have become more negative in the past few years. Also negative social phenomena like skipping classes, disturbing in the classroom and bullying are causing more trouble in the Finnish schools than in the average of the OECD countries. Students also feel that student-teacher -relationships are not that well functioning. The achievement gaps between boys and girls and majority and minority students are also increasing. (Finnish Institute for Educational Research 27 January 2014.)

The students with foreign language as their home language and the students that have repeated a grade during primary school are the groups which Finnish educators should pay special attention to. The amount of these students is significantly low, but these students also tend to perform significantly lower than average. However when compared to the other countries the achievement gap between the highest and lowest performers in Finland seems to be narrow and the least successful students in Finland seem to be performing better than the least successful students in other countries. Just like in other countries Finnish students come from diverse backgrounds, but the background seems not to have a great impact on school success. (Välijärvi, Kupari, Linnakylä, Reinikainen, Sulkunen, Törnroos & Arffman 2007, 5–35.)

It has been researched that conscientious and hard-working people succeed better in school and work. (Pervin 1996, 43 - 51) Schema is a cognitive structure that organizes the information. It controls what information is taken in and how is it recorded and how is it recalled. There are personal differences in how all this is processed. Some schemas are distinctive and common for a

culture some are unique and personal. (Pervin 1996, 87 - 89) The self-determined motivation has been seen in various researches having link to academic success. Also researches show that students with self-determined motivation for schoolwork are more likely to graduate from school instead of dropping out. Social context that supports the relatedness, competence and autonomy of the student has a positive effect on self-determined motivation and if these three psychological needs fail to be supported the motivation will also be weakened. (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier & Ryan 1991, 331–333.)

Lawrence A. Pervin presents Bandura's self-efficacy theory, which examines the people's idea of own efficacy in certain situations. People tend to estimate how well they can manage different situations. They feel, think and act in a different ways in situations where they feel capable compared to situation where they feel unable to manage. By the Bandura's theory "self" does not refer to something the person has instead it is about cognitive processes in which the "self" is part of. Self-efficacy is not equal to general self-concept rather the person estimates her/his own efficacy in contexts of certain situations and tasks. Motivation and goals are important factors behind Bandura's theory. The willingness to reach for the goals depends on the feedback. The estimations of self-efficacy have an important role with attempts, aims and engagement that are concerned with motivation. According to Bandura the actions are determined by the expectations and predictions of the causes. (Pervin 1996, 83–86.)

Bandura has done more research on motivations and setting the goals. According to Bandura people's inner standards present us goals and base waiting for confirmation from others and themselves. Person activates when he/she engages to the goal, estimates the effort that it requires to achieve it and prepares for the causes which the achieving or failing may cause. Inner and outer confirmations have an influence on achieving the goals. The pride of achievement and guilt and embarrassment of a failure are seen as important inner powers of self-regulation. During times when the outer confirmation is not offered the self-confirmation keeps the person focused. The power of motivation is not about the goals themselves, it is more about how well people estimate the situations and react to their own actions. The goals set standards for positive or negative self-evaluation to pursue achievements or to get driven further from them. (Pervin 1996, 280–287.)

However an attempt to define school success would be incomplete without considering the social perspective. Students tend to be more satisfied with school when they feel accepted, appreciated and equal. Those feelings can be achieved when relationships work well in school, students feel safe and confident and schoolwork feels reasonable. The more satisfied the students are, the more they learn. When students are satisfied with school they feel less alienated from school, misbehave less and school achievements are better. (Räsänen & Kivirauma 2011, 46–47.)

As many other worried American researchers Whitley, Huebner, Hills & Valois (2012) are stating that the recent school reforms in the USA have been focusing too much on academic achievement levels as indicators of school effectiveness. They are concerned how little the contextual and socio-emotional issues are considered while attempting to determine the quality. At the same time researches show that people who are satisfied with their overall life perform better with their work, love and health, which seems to be happening with middle-school students as well. (Whitley, Huebner, Hills & Valois 2012, 337–338.)

School as working environment can be divided into physical and social environments. For school satisfaction it is essential that the environment is supportive and safe. Researches show that Finnish schools are not actually investing enough to political and social student involvement. Finnish students feel that they are not allowed to participate in decision making even though they would like to. Students also feel that many school issues would get better if schools would allow the students to get involved. Another fault in Finnish schools is that there are not many real conversations in the classrooms. Teachers do not use clarifying questions as a teaching method that much and do not always involve students into the conversation. (Kiilakoski 2012, 30–42.)

Suldo's, Thalji-Raitano's, Hasemeyer's, Gelley's & Hoy's (2012, 176–177) study tells that school climate seems to have an influence on general life satisfaction. The reason behind their study was that other recent studies tell that life satisfaction seems in turn to have an influence on better school results. Well behaving students and working discipline make students feel safe. Feeling safe, having good peer and student teacher relationships make the school climate better. In addition, parent involvement, which is clearly more common in the USA than in Finland, seems to effect positively especially on girls' school satisfaction. (Suldo, Thalji-Raitano, Hasemeyer, Gelley & Hoy 2012, 176–177.)

Psychology Catherine Savage from New Zealand explains her experience on how teacher and a student with Maori -background were having trouble with communication. Teacher misunderstood the student's behavior, which was distinctive for the student's cultural background. Teacher's behavior in turn lead student behave in a way that teacher did not approve. Teacher's earlier experiences conducted teacher's interpretations and actions. Scrutinizing things in a whole different perspective may be troublesome and requires active listening and interpreting the other. It is essential that teacher recognizes, reflects and rules own values, ideas, feelings and stances. (Savage 2010, 36–37.)

Also Cherrington & Green believe in the importance of communication between teacher and students. One of the responsibilities of teacher is to enhance the social cohesion in the classroom. That is why it is necessary to also consider the way of speaking; the words and manners must not be

imperceptibly discriminative. (Cherrington & Green 2010, 232.) Teacher's positive attitude enhances the student-teacher relationship. A good student-teacher relationship in the other hand is important for engaging students to learning and co-operation. For the students at-risk of not performing well at schools a good student teacher relationship is specifically crucial. (Hullena & Hullena 2010, 10.) Teacher needs to have an ability to listen, understand, respect, communicate, appreciate and encourage the student for decision making and enhancing the self-confidence. Teacher also needs to create a safe learning environment, to put expectations on a suitable level and have a little bit of a sense of humor. (Hullena & Hullena 2010, 13–17.) According to Vanessa A. Green and Sue Cherrington it gets us one step closer to the right way, when teacher really adopts the diversity. But the real issue will be combining the rights and responsibilities of an individual and a group. Differentiating is challenging with a particularly diverse group. (Green & Cherrington 2010, 2.)

Researches tell that functioning co-operation between school and home has many positive effects. It has a positive role for school success, appreciation and attitudes towards education. Co-operation has an influence on the general atmosphere in school and classroom. It also has a pre-emptive perspective; with co-operation problems can be noticed and worked on earlier. Communication helps teacher to get to know the pupil better and this information can be used when planning and improving teaching. There needs to be a mutual appreciation and respect in order to get a working relationship between teachers and parents. Co-operation may be fulfilled by many different ways. (Finnish National Board of Education 2007, 2–3, 7.)

The adolescents in Finland feel that the co-operation between school and home does not work properly and there are problems with communication. Some researches state that co-operation has been increasing in the 2000's. Parents are interested in their children's schooling, but they are not willing to come to the school to discuss with the teachers. Usually the school is the more active part of the communication. The adolescent have themselves stated that some problems could have been prevented if the communication between school and home had been functioning better. (Kiilakoski 2012, 48–52.)

In conclusion, as hard as it seems to define the school success, the main perspectives in literature considering school success seem to be the level of academic success measured by grades and learning results, school satisfaction and social relationships. Therefore in this research I have divided the term school success into two different approaches, which are cognitive, pedagogical approach and social approach. By cognitive, pedagogical approach I mean academic success, grades and other learning results. Social approach in turn means how enjoyable the students find their school day in general and how well the social relationships seem to be working in school.

### **3 ORGANIZING SCHOOLING**

For the present research it is essential to explain the educational systems in Finland and in Florida. What stands in curricula? Who makes decisions? How are they formed? How about the teacher education? To understand better where we stand right now and where are we heading to, we should know the background and the history, the course of events behind. In addition to the current situation in the field of education in this chapter I will also be focusing on the history of educational systems in Finland and in Florida. In my research I attempt to find out Finnish emigrants views on differences in everyday school life issues between Finland and Florida. Thus some of these issues will be considered and determined by official documents, laws and curricula.

#### **3.1 HISTORY OF EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM**

##### ***Finland***

Until the mid-19th century the established church was the institution organizing the schooling in Finland. The class society was prevailing in Finland and Finland was under Sweden's superpower administration until 1809. Then Finland became a grand duchy for Russian empire with great amount of autonomy. The formal education was acceptable and possible only for a chosen few. During the time of change in mid-19th century began the modernizing of the Finnish society. The civil society started replacing the old Christian-moral class society. Individual rights instead of the family or relatives' rights began to arise in people's mind. The position in society was no longer determined when a person was born rather the politically and socially aware individual had a chance to find the position himself. The growing administration needed more civil servants than soldiers. Different skills and abilities became appreciated after the industrialization. Paid labor was a growing part of the total economy. (Heikkinen & Leino-Kaukiainen 2011, 11–12.)

Schooling was institutionalized and professionalized. Elementary school teachers became honored role models. Teacher profession was one of the first professions that were allowed for women. As the schooling system was developing the line between school and home in educational responsibility started wavering. When the power of family and church began decreasing, people also began questioning the authorities. Citizens started to take part in political discussions and decision making more and more. At this time socioeconomic status still had its effect on schooling. Also the living location had its influence, since it was much harder to get educated in rural areas compared to urban areas. Nevertheless, it was now easier for all to get involved in school education.



Finns had already a strong belief in knowledge and ability and the differences between rural and urban areas smoothed as time went by. (Heikkinen & Leino-Kaukiainen 2011, 11–13.) Pastor Uno Cygnaeus, who has been known as the father of Finnish elementary school, made a suggestion for parliament to create an elementary school system in Finland. This suggestion was a part of the Elementary School Act, which was composed in 1866. The church's power was opened to question. When the schooling was separated from church in 1869, a new separate school education administration field was created. It was extended the under state and municipality administrations. (Leino-Kaukiainen & Heikkinen 2011, 16–18.)

In 1906 a new political party system was created. Finally in 1917 Finland declared its independence from Russia. A great milestone in the history of Finnish school was the legislation of compulsory education in 1921. After that the elementary school education syllabus would mean at least six years education and that could be gained by going to a school or by homeschooling. World War II put the development to a pause. After the war the time of the reconstruction began. Finland had a great amount of war reparations to pay and the country's economy needed immediate growth. Finns started to work hard and also during that time a great baby boom started to spread around the country. Before 1970s there were two types of schools: elementary schools which focused on vocational skills and grammar schools which focused more on academic studies. (Leino-Kaukiainen & Heikkinen 2011, 18–25.)

Most of the students studied in an elementary school since they were seen more suitable for ordinary people. Grammar schools in turn were targeted more towards the elite. (Tuomaala 2011, 106.) After elementary school it was possible to continue to civics school. The main goals of civics school were to teach good manners and prepare students for work. (Jauhiainen 2011, 302.) However during the reconstruction time after the Second World War Finnish parents began to value the education more and more and wanted their children to have a higher education. In the 1930s only 11 % of the age group studied in the grammar schools. In the 1960s the percentage was already 60 %. (Halinen & Pietilä 2004, 96.)

1968 was a significant year in the history of Finnish school. That time Finnish parliament set a law to establish a new Finnish comprehensive school. Behind that reform was a thought that everyone regardless of his or her background and socio-economic status should have an equal opportunity for education. (Kettunen, Jalava, Simola & Varjo 37.) The change and development in the school system have been slow. Scientists and researchers from different study fields have been studying the school system a lot. (Heikkinen & Leino-Kaukiainen 2011, 12–13.)

From the beginning of the reform there has been a huge debate on the Finnish unitary comprehensive school. Supporters believe that everyone should have an equal opportunity and

possibility for education. If the opportunity is given, anyone can succeed. The critics have been strongly against the idea that all students could actually achieve academic success. There have been claims among opposites that not everyone is capable to be successful in school. Some even believe that the success is determined by genetics. Another topic has been the most successful and talented students. There has been critique that the comprehensive school attempts to make students a homogenous group and talents are not supported properly in this kind of system. The debate has been going on quite tensely until the beginning of the 21st century. That is when the first PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) results came out. In the international comparisons Finland was successful in academic skills. (Rinne 2006, 116–118.)

### ***The USA***

Strong Protestant Reform of Europe in the 1500s has its influence on the United States of America today. Since the Europe's colonization of America grew stronger after the Catholic time, there were various different religious views formed among groups of people. Thus schools were originally places for worship and there was religious instruction behind all the education. These religious groups, like Puritans, started to establish more and more schools around the United States. When even more Europeans started to flee to the USA in the 1700s, even free schools were established for the poor and the orphans. The Civil War in the 1800s also had its influence on the history of education. Money from the school districts was used in the war activity. After the Civil War there was a lack of money and a lack of qualified teachers, but the amount of students was increasing as slaves were being released to freedom. But as the time went by during the time of reconstruction when the economy started recovering even new universities were constructed. (Marlow-Ferguson 2001, 1491–1497.)

In the beginning of the educational history, religion was strongly connected to schools. By time and by the increasing amount of immigrants the religious issues had to be considered more carefully. However in the late 19th century Catholic Church had an interest to broaden its influence by establishing schools around the USA. That example encouraged other churches to do the same. 1925 religious denominations were legally given a permission to operate private schools and parents were given the right to choose which school their children will study in. (Marlow-Ferguson 2001, 1498–1500.)

After the Second World War, just like Finland, the USA was going through a baby boom. Schools were put under a pressure on educating youth towards more a technological future. All though the citizens were promised an equal education that really was not what was going on in schools. Women did not have equal possibilities compared to men. African Americans and Mexican

Americans were strictly segregated from whites to separate schools. African American and Mexican American schools did not enjoy same amount of concern and funding as the schools of whites. There was a tense debate and struggle before the separation was finally illegalized. Still the integration took its time and the time of segregation has its influence even today. (Lara 2001, 132–143.)

In 1965 during the time of president Lyndon Johnson, Elementary and Secondary Education Act was founded. The purpose of the legislation was to guarantee the educational equality by supporting the poor families. By the United States Constitution, education is under the control of states. Therefore each state writes it's own statutes of education. For the well being of the citizens every state is responsible for offering public education, but the federal government has also its responsibility for providing material resources to schools of the USA and stepping in if any violations may occur. (Marlow-Ferguson 2001, 1497–1498.)

Today the public schooling is offered for every child in the USA. Thus the public school system is based on the equalitarian idea. However the quality of the education has been under discussion, since it is seen not spread evenly between different schools and areas. (Trani & Irvine 2010, 6.) There have been several attempts to enhance the quality of education in the USA in the near history. These school reforms have not gained the functionality that was desired. Some features and parts like age-graded schooling from these reforms have been adopted to the school system, but the attempts to enhance the system are still on. (Tharp 2008, 55.) The racial segregation mentioned before caused the Black children not to have the same quality schools as the White children had. Today many commentators believe that the economic segregation in the USA is causing the same trouble. Randy K. Trani and Robert K. Irvine (2010) state that comprehensive public school system is still quite young in the USA and there are no straight answers how to achieve the excellence in school system. (Trani & Irvine 2010, 6–7.) Therefore the discussion of how to enhance the quality and equality of education in the USA seems to be the current actual topic in the field of education. Should the school choice be ensured better? (Coulson 2011; Foster 2011.) And how well the multicultural issues are taken into consideration? (Carlos 2001; Amin & Paris 2014.)

### 3.2 STRUCTURES OF SCHOOL SYSTEMS

#### *Finland*

The Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland is responsible for preparing all the laws, decrees and decisions concerning education (Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland 17.11.2014). Municipalities and their administrations are obligated to organize the schooling (Basic Education Act 1998, 4§). The Finnish comprehensive school takes nine years. The extent of preliminary education for immigrant students is one year. (Basic Education Act 1998, 9§.) If the child is handicapped or otherwise in need for special support, compulsory education starts one year earlier and may end one year after than the usual nine year period of school. Therefore the compulsory education may take maximum of eleven years. (Basic Education Act 1998, 25§.)

Most of the elementary teachers are class teachers in Finland. This means that they teach most of the subjects taught in the grades 1–6. Teachers at lower secondary school instead, are subject teachers. They specialize in one or two school subjects and take additional pedagogical courses to qualify as teachers. The lower secondary school means grades 7–9 and is comparable to the middle school in the USA. Most of the schools are public and organized by municipalities. Only 2 % of the comprehensive schools in Finland are private or state run. (National Board of Education 22.11.2014.) Teaching language is mostly either Finnish or Swedish. Teaching language may also be Sami, Romani or sign language. It is possible that teaching language is partially some other language for example only some part of the school day. Some separate classrooms or schools may offer teaching full time in other language than the languages mentioned above. (Basic Education Act 1998, 10§.)

The subjects taught in the comprehensive school are: language and literature (usually Finnish), other national language (Swedish), other foreign languages, environmental studies (e.g. biology, geography), health education, religion or ethical studies, history, civics, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, geography, physical education, music, art, handicraft and domestic science. (Basic Education Act 1998, 11§.) Finnish students begin to study foreign language at the third grade. This is called A1 -language. There are different languages options, but almost all students study English as a A1-language. Studying the second national language Swedish will be started at the seventh grade. A1 and B1 are mandatory. That means that all Finnish students have to study at least one foreign language in addition to two national languages in Finland (Finnish and Swedish). Additional two foreign languages that are obligatory and dependent on the language options the school offers are A2-language, which can be started at the fourth grade and B2-language, which can be started at the eighth grade. (Kangasvuori, Miettinen, Kukkohovi & Härmälä

2011, 8–9.) Government determines how the schooling hours are divided between all the subjects taught in school and how many hours are required in total (Basic Education Act 1998, 11§).

Schooling is considered as public practice. That means that everyone has a right to go and follow the schoolwork. (Basic Education Act 1998, 19§). School year consists of 190 school days. There must be enough time for rest, refreshing and hobbies after the school days, school journeys and homework. (Basic Education Act 1998, 24§). Compulsory education begins during the year when the child turns seven years and it lasts until the comprehensive school is accomplished or until it is ten years from the beginning of the studies (Basic Education Act 1998, 25§). Education and all the material required are free for all. Also everyone is offered a free and full meal of high standard during the school day. (Basic Education Act 1998, 31§). If the school journey is longer than five kilometers, students are justified for free transport. (Basic Education Act 1998, 32§).

### ***Florida***

At the present moment the structure of the American school system is basically the same in all states, although years of compulsory education vary between states. Basic education is compulsory and free. Usually basic education means kindergarten (*esikoulu*), primary school or elementary school (*alakoulu*) and lower secondary school or middle school (*yläkoulu*). It usually means the grades from kindergarten to eighth grade. Children can take part in day care when they are under five years old. Kindergarten is for children who are five years old and school will begin at the age of six. After basic education children can attend to high school and after high school they have an opportunity to apply for a college or a university. (Alexander 2001, 101 – 103.) In Florida all children from six to sixteen years are required to attend to school. Compulsory education begins from the school year during which the child turns six by the time of February 1. Compulsory education ends that day when the child turns sixteen. Child is not required to attend kindergarten before the child has attained the age of compulsory education. However in this case, the schooling will be started in kindergarten when the age of six years is attained. If the kindergarten is successfully accomplished before the age of compulsory education, child will move on straight to the first grade. (The 2010 Florida Statutes 1003.21, (1)(a)1.–2.(c).)

State Board of Education works as the highest positioning element for organizing, implementing and adopting the educational political decisions into public schools. State Board co-operates with the Federal Government and has a responsibility for supervising the school districts. (The 2010 Florida Statutes 1001.02, (1) – (6).) The Commissioner of Education has access to all educational statewide data. Commissioner supports and assists the work of the State Board and is responsible for example for budget development and strategic planning. (The 2010 Florida Statutes

1001.10, (1) – (6).) Department of Education works under State Board by putting its work into practice. (The 2010 Florida Statutes 1001.20, (1) – (4).) Each county in Florida is a school district itself (The 2010 Florida Statutes 1001.30). In school district level School Boards have the highest responsibility for operating, controlling and supervising the public schools in the area. School superintendent works for School Boards as an executive officer and secretary. School principal or the head of the school is responsible of the work in their school. (The 2010 Florida Statutes 1001.32, (1) – (4).)

Parents can choose from multiple choices of schools where their child will apply. There are two categories of public options, which are public schools and charter schools, but there are also two private categories, which are private schools and homeschooling. (The 2010 Florida Statutes 1002.20, (6).) Students along with their parents who have a limited English proficiency have an opportunity to receive ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) instruction to develop and enhance the fluency of English. (The 2010 Florida Statutes 1002.20, (10).) School Board makes the decisions of school transportation by the recommendations of the School Superintendent. Safety, economy and efficiency are all taken into consideration when making the decisions. (The 2010 Florida Statutes 1006.21, (1)–(5).) All school districts must follow state-wide educational instructions used to be called *the Sunshine State Standards*, but the standards were updated and are now called *Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS)*. NGSSS determine more precisely what children should learn during compulsory education, what sort of and which level of knowledge and skills they should achieve. At least language arts, science, social studies and mathematics must be taught in all schools. (The 2010 Florida Statutes 1003.41, (1)(a).)

### **3.3 CURRICULA**

#### ***Finland***

Education in Finland is based on the national core curriculum. It is maintained and updated by the national board of education. The organizers of schooling must compose and accept a detailed curriculum by clarifying and completing the national core curriculum. Teachers are responsible for following the curriculum. The curriculum may have sectors concerning the educational issues of the whole municipality, a specific area or only a specific school. The curriculum must be created in co-operation between all the teachers teaching in the elementary school and kindergarten (*esiopetus*). Parents must be heard as well. There are various educational perspectives to take into consideration in the curriculum. These values, principles and strategies are listed in the national core curriculum

to make sure they will be included in the lower level curricula. The curriculum shall consist of the educational goals, central subject matters, description of what a good state of knowledge requires and the criteria of the final assessment in the end of the 9th and final grade of the compulsory education. Also issues of special education, remedial instructions, linguistic and cultural minority groups and student welfare services must be considered and included in the curriculum. Although there is a law on how many hours per subject should be spent in school, Finnish national core curriculum encourages in integrating different subjects to create an integrated entity of the subject matters and to link the contents to everyday life experiences. (Finnish National Core Curriculum 2004, 10–15.) The national core curriculum is processed at the moment and updated National Core Curriculum will be put in use in 2016. (OPS 2016.)

### ***Florida***

The Bureau of Standards and Instructional Support manage the curriculum of Florida. As explained before curriculum in use at the moment is called Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (NGSSS). The NGSSS are divided into sections by grades and subjects. The standards determine the central content of each subject on the each grade and also more detailed description of what should be learned and what level of knowledge should be achieved. In contrary to Finland the NGSSS is more practical approach to education and the values and purpose behind the education are clarified and documented in the Florida Statutes. The Office of Assessment in Florida works under the Florida Department of Education. The Office arranges testing services for the schools of Florida. The assessment work is based on Florida and Federal regulations and laws and Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Every student in public schools is required to complete the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) during spring each school year. Private schools are not required to participate in the FCAT. At the moment the testing and assessment system in use is FCAT 2.0 updated version from FCAT. FCAT 2.0 is a statewide assessment system and was established in 1998 to assess the level of knowledge and skills and to increase student achievement. (Florida Department of Education 19.11.2014.)

### 3.4 TEACHER EDUCATION

#### *Finland*

Jyväskylä Seminar for elementary school teacher education was established in 1863. Back then only grammar school teachers studied in the universities. Discussion about Finnish Comprehensive School divided teachers into two separate groups. Elementary school teachers were mostly supporting it and grammar school teachers against it. Comprehensive school system was finally established and all Finnish schools were transferred to comprehensive schools during the years 1972–1977. Teacher education in university got its real start and development from the founding of comprehensive school. (Jauhiainen & Rinne 2012, 105–113.) Teacher education was moved to a university-level program in 1974. Before that it took only one year to achieve a qualification to teach in elementary schools for an upper-secondary school graduate. (Saarivirta 2008, 8.)

Teacher education has been and is still rather attractive field among applicants. Universities can choose between numerous applicants the most suitable and motivated students. That has been one of the ways to explain why Finnish school system has been ranked so high in international comparisons during the last decade. Most of the teachers enjoy their work and see it meaningful. Teachers' work is changing all the time by the technological and cultural development and this brings new challenges for the teacher education. (Kumpulainen 2014, 18–21.)

Ministry of Education and Culture states that education in Finland is seen as foundation for society's well being. All the students have an equal right for good quality education and instructions. The quality should always be good enough to guarantee further studies or employment. Therefore the personnel working in schools must be professional and qualified. That is ensured by keeping the number of teacher students adequate when compared to the society's need of teachers. In 2013 88,7 % of all part-time and full-time teachers and principals were qualified for their work. It seems that at this moment it is easier for students specializing in elementary school work to attain dual-qualification for teaching in both elementary schools and middle schools by taking additional courses for some specific subject than students studying to be middle school teachers to attain the dual-qualification. This should be focused in the future because teachers specializing especially on art and practical subjects would be needed more in elementary schools. (Kumpulainen 2014, 13–16.)

From the beginning of the old elementary schools system Finnish teachers have been government officials. There has always been a belief among Finns that teachers profession is chosen by strong calling for the work, people tend to stay in teacher profession for their entire life and it requires dedication. After the comprehensive school reform teachers were expected to adopt the mentality of



equality, which was seen as an essential value for a welfare state. (Vuorikoski & Räisänen 2010, 63.) From the 1980s during neoliberalistic time competitiveness, efficiency and productivity have become the most desired values of the new society that is based on market economy. This has brought new expectations into the field of education as well. The quality, efficiency, behavior and customer satisfaction of teachers' educational work have become subjects of assessment even in the Finnish society. Finnish education system has been widely known for its trust towards teachers' professionalism and teachers' strong and now apparently transient autonomy. Now this traditional relationship of trust between the state and teacher profession has begun wavering. (Vuorikoski & Räisänen 2010, 70–78.)

Vuorikoski and Räisänen (2010, 72–73.) point out that teachers should be using their strong educational, scientific and pedagogical knowledge by participating actively in the development work. Otherwise the decisions will be made by people without hardly any experience from the educational field. At the same time researches tell that teachers feel tired and overloaded by the amount of work they are expected. Vuorikoski and Räisänen suggest that the discussion inside the teacher profession and dealing with the educational science should be enhanced in order to encourage the teachers to use their knowledge and power in determining the educational values in our society and to participate the political decision-making. (Vuorikoski & Räisänen 2010, 70–78.)

Marita Mäkinen (interview 27 May 2014) explains that all the teachers must have a Master's degree in Finland to be a certified teacher. It takes approximately five years to achieve the degree. It is legal to hire uncertified teacher for temporary contract, but it is not possible to get a permanent position without a full certification. Teacher education contains four dimensions. These dimensions are educational science approach, which creates the base for everything else, subject matter approach that is linked to the practice by the third dimension, practical training, and the research work, which is the final assignment of the studies the Master's Thesis.

### ***The USA***

Teacher education in the USA originates from the beginning of the 19th century. Normal schools were established for the teacher training by the style of French *école normale*. (Gutek 2006, 169–170.) Normal schools could not answer the lack of professional teachers well enough and additional Teacher's Institutes were established during that time. The difference between normal schools and institutes was that normal schools contained one or later even three years studies. Teachers' Institutes instead, were courses that took only some weeks. (Fraser 2007, 43–63.) Unsurprisingly in the USA the teacher education was popular among women, since they did not have many other career options. At that time teacher education was not yet organized in the

universities. (Gutek 2006, 169–170.) First step towards universities was in the 1920s when all the normal schools became Teachers' Colleges. (Fraser 2007, 184.)

Linda Darling-Hammond (2010) strongly claims that if the teacher education in the USA will not soon take a step ahead we will see “a modern-day equivalent of the fall of Rome” during our lifetimes. Darling-Hammond states that teacher education equals American future. She bases her prediction on the lack of development during last few decades in achievements and international educational comparisons. The situation is that universities and colleges offer different kinds of programs for teacher certification that vary between schools of education and between states. The input and the quality of education vary enormously between states. There has been a significant amount of research and debate by analysts, policy makers and practitioners about education if whether and how different teacher preparation and support approaches have an effect. Some critics have even claimed that teacher certification and education does not guarantee the best possible student achievements and the teacher profession is actually learned via real work. Darlin-Hammond underlines that pre service preparation does not only help students feel more prepared, it also increases the probability that teachers stay in the profession long enough to gain more experience and effectiveness. The first three years after attaining the certification seem to be significant for improvement. One of the most important ways to improve the teacher education would be growing a stable bridge between universities and schools. (Darling-Hammond 2010, 35–43.)

Just like in Finland the teachers in the USA are now facing the challenges of the development of technology and social media. What is different though that there seems to be a huge achievement gap between students from different backgrounds. That is not the situation in Finland, at least not yet. During last two decades the federal government has made attempts to narrow the gaps between students. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) from 2001 and Race to the Top (RTTT) are two of these federal programs. Donna L. Wiseman (2012) criticizes the NCLB for its attempts to define a highly qualified teacher and its emphasis on subject matter preparation. The NCLB had an effect on American schools of education to make them focus more on subject matters detriment of pedagogical issues. The RTTT's emphasis is similar on subject matter, but what is different to the NCLB is that the RTTT raises the importance of teacher education and its influence on student achievement into the discussion. But the RTTT like other movements is encouraging teacher education programs towards statewide data and measurement systems to find out the impact of teacher education. What happens next is, that these systems make schools of education to change the way they report their data or select their students and the struggle to find out the real impact of teacher education continues. (Wiseman 2012, 87–88.)

Many empirical studies in the USA have attempted to specify the specific characteristics that lead to higher student achievement. The challenge has been seen as the determination of teacher quality and suitable policies promoting it. For years the focus on evaluating the impact of teachers has been on student assessment and rather recently the focus has been widened to cover wider perspective for example the teachers' working conditions. Teacher quality is measured differently across the world and teachers also have different cultural roles. However teachers around the world seem to be quite unanimous on basic subject matters for example in mathematics. (Akiba & LeTendre 2009, 43–44.)

95,1 % of the eighth-grade mathematics teachers in the USA have a full certification. 63,7 % of the eighth-grade teachers have a full certification, mathematics or mathematics education major and three or more years experience. However only 51,9 % of eighth-grade mathematics teachers in schools of low socio-economic status have full certification, mathematics or mathematics education major and three or more years of experience. Instead 75,0 % of mathematics teachers have that background in schools with high socio-economic status. (Akiba & LeTendre 2009, 47–53.)

Doctor Carlos Diaz (interview 10.1.2014) explains that for teacher certification one must have at least bachelor's degree (baccalaureate) that takes minimum of four years if you are able to study full-time. First two years in a college are called freshmen years. During these years all student regardless of their major are studying the same basic studies. During third and fourth year they focus on their major. However it is possible to teach even without a full certificate. To enhance employment it is possible for example for an unemployed engineer to work as an algebra teacher for ninth-graders by passing a test to get the certification. But this kind of certification is only temporary and must be updated by attending workshops that school district offers and renewing the test. Other option is to take educational courses in a university to get a full certification. Typically in Florida teachers choose which grade they are going to focus on their career. Thus the teacher changes on every grade. Usually teachers teach four major subject areas which are English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. If the school does not have a separate teacher for Arts, Physical Education or Music, then teacher might be asked to teach a little of those as well. In some bigger schools where they have more classes of the same grade, teachers may use different model. One teacher may for example teach Mathematics and Science while the other one is teaching English and Social Studies. In this case the classes are rotated between these two teachers. Middle school teachers however specialize in one or two subjects.

## 4 MULTICULTURALISM

Carlos F. Diaz (2001) addresses his concern about the future of the United States in the introduction of “Multicultural Education for the 21st Century”. Because of the history of the USA, the wealthiest, most successful and powerful citizens of the nation tend to be white and especially male. However because of the increasing amount of immigrants doctor Diaz states that there will not be enough white males to take care of the nation’s needs in the future. For the wealth of the nation, educating those who have not been faring well in schools must certainly be paid attention to. To prepare pupils to be caring and active citizens a multicultural curriculum would be a necessary base. Knowledge is the way to overcome prejudice and stereotypes. Critical thinking is an essential counterpart of knowledge. (Diaz 2001, vii-viii.) Therefore in my opinion critical thinking should be one of the main perspectives of pedagogical decision making in schools to raise smarter and more tolerant citizens.

Multiculturalism will be an inevitable perspective in my research, because the answerers themselves are Finnish emigrants. Their view on Floridian basic education is an immigrants view and their children are immigrants in the Floridian school system. Thus it is essential to understand the context where these people live and study. Also multiculturalism in general clearly is distinctive for Florida. The amount of immigrants is increasing in Finland too. It is a fairly new phenomenon and needs to get under more precise inspection in order to keep up with the growth and international competition. Finland should take a critical look for solutions of other countries and reflect these findings to their own experiences. In this chapter I will first offer a definition for multicultural education. Then I will be explaining more about the differences of immigration between the giant USA and tiny Finland. Multicultural teaching is also one of the topics in this essay. Multicultural education demands specific skills from teachers. As I have learned everything new and different brings along intolerance and prejudice. These stances and challenges are slightly opened later in this thesis.

As I am familiarizing myself with the multiculturalism in the USA I come to understand how much the cultural and ethnical diversity of the huge country and the influences of colonialism starting from the end of 18th century still effect and shape the political discussion in the USA. There is no doubt that electing Barack Obama as a president was a huge historical step not only towards more open racial conversations but more open multicultural society in the USA. Yet there

has been criticism towards the shyness and unwillingness of American people to take part in racial conversations. (Willinsky 2012, 15.)

Among some white citizens opinion was that the election of Barack Obama was suspicious and questionable because of his Muslim and multiracial background and the election raised a strong debate. (Henry 2012, 43–46.) While exploring the American society, the importance of religion even on political decisions can be seen as characteristic for American people. In my experience religion does not have as visible role in the Finnish culture. Surprisingly though religion is one of the school subjects in Finnish basic education. (Basic Education Act §13). But religion is only one of the various aspects of multiculturalism. Annette Henry (2012) argues the problematicism of the term *multiculturalism*. She claims that there is no definitional consensus on the multiculturalism in either every day life or academic context. The term has been criticized to its differentiated approach. Henry avows herself as an anti-multiculturalist and explains that the main questions in the USA are actually: who can be on the inside and who must remain on the outside? The multiculturalism and multilingualism are still not parts of official national American policies. (Henry 2012, 43–46.)

## 4.1 MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Like Annette Henry also Tuittu, Klemelä, Rinne and Räsänen are recognizing critical conversation around the term *multiculturalism*. In their article they introduce two different ways to view the term multiculturalism. It can be seen by *descriptive way* which means that people from different backgrounds live side by side somewhere for example in a country or in a school. It can also be seen by *political way*. It means that ethnical diversity is desirable state in a society and it should be aimed by political means. (Tuittu, Klemelä, Rinne & Räsänen 2011, 21–24.) But among teachers there seems to be difficulties for understanding the real definition of multicultural education. Definitional difference between multicultural and global education appears in the approach towards education. Multicultural education examines cultural diversity, human rights, curricular contents and reduction of prejudice specifically in the country of residence. Global education contains more shallow comparisons between countries around the world. (Diaz, Massialas & Xanthopoulos 1999, 3.) James A. Banks and Cherry A. McGee Banks (2004, xi) define multicultural education this way:

*“Multicultural education is a field of study and an emerging discipline whose major aim is to create equal educational opportunities for students from diverse racial, ethnic, social-class and cultural groups. One of its important goals is to help all*

*students acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function effectively in a pluralistic democratic society and to interact, negotiate, and communicate with people from diverse groups to create civic and moral community that works for the common good."*

Banks and Banks explain that the origin of the deep historical roots of multicultural education is from African-American scholarship in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Intercultural education in the 1930s, which was a research and curriculum reform movement, arose in the 1960s and disappeared by the time the civil rights movement. This civil rights movement is a reform movement where current the definition of multicultural education is originally from. Frustrated African-Americans joined by other ethnic and racial groups protested against the government, demanding changes especially in the field of education. The manifest made an influence and *black studies*, which were later called *ethnic studies*, were taken into courses and programs nationwide. Soon students and educators realized that this form of ethnic studies was not enough to enhance the equality in schools, colleges and universities. As an attempt to answer that need, *multiethnic education* was created. These educational movements encouraged other ethnical groups and also feminists to push for change. Researchers and literature of multicultural education are interested in the dependency between different variables for example race, class and gender. (Banks & Banks 2004, xi-xii)

Multicultural education can be approached in five dimensions. Using data and information from different cultures in the classroom to give examples and to demonstrate the principles, generalizations and theory is called *content integration*. In most schools multicultural education is based only on content integration. *The knowledge construction process* refers to the construction process scientists of social, behavioral and natural science. In this process teacher helps students understand the learning process behind knowledge and how all the cultural dimensions and positions of individuals influence on the process. *Prejudice reduction* is the idea of describing the racial attitudes of children and creating new strategies to achieve more equal and tolerant atmosphere. *Equity pedagogy* means that teachers use different methods and allow students use learning strategies that fit best for them considering their background. Finally *empowering school culture* means that the whole culture of the school is changed and developed towards more equal and tolerant atmosphere and empowerment by working all together. (Banks 2004, 4–6.) In an ideal situation the education would be constructed from all these dimensions and that would be the way to raise a real multicultural society.

## 4.2 IMMIGRATION

Multiculturalism is a natural part of every day life in the USA. The USA is remarkably diverse by the original countries and original citizenships of its population. It is more diverse than most of the countries in the World. (Alexander 2001, 101.) In the history, the immigration of Europeans has happened in great waves over the time as a search for better life. The adaptation has not been easy. Starting the mid-1800's European immigrants have suffered from discrimination and even violence. Nowadays most of the immigrants come from Latin America and Asia. Also when talking about colonialism we cannot forget the Americans Indians who have been forced into subordinate position in the country. Another example about involuntary immigration is the African Americans who were originally brought in the USA by slavery. (Bennett 2011, 125, 129 & 141.)

It is notable if the immigration was voluntary or involuntary. Those migrants who have moved to the USA voluntarily seeking for better life, have succeeded well after some struggles in the beginning. The African Americans who came to the USA involuntarily in the first place are still in subordinate position in the society and have a pessimistic view of school success and its promises of future. Parents forward this impression to their children and it works as a repetitive prediction. (Räsänen & Kivirauma 2011, 38–39.) School has an important role on cutting these predictions by supporting equality and encouraging all the students despite of their background. But this would only be achieved with open-minded and professional teachers without any harmful preconceptions. These stances will be discoursed later on this essay.

Finnish national curriculum defines that all students who have moved from another country or whose parents have moved from another country are immigrants. The amount of immigrant students has increased steadily starting from the 1990s. Immigrant students are justified to the same means of support in school as native students for example remedial instructions. There are also own supportive operations designed especially for immigrant students. (Tuittu, Klemelä, Rinne & Räsänen 2011, 21–24.)

It can be said that the time of multiculturalism in Finland started in the 1990's the amount of immigrants certainly started to increase. The reasons behind that phenomenon were conflicts abroad, changes in foreign politics, increasing amount of marriages between foreigners and Finns and increasing amount of foreign adoptions. Although the amount of immigrants is still increasing the amount of emigrants is quite as large. That is why the total population is not rapidly increasing. Finland is still somewhat monolithic because the amount of immigrants is low compared to other European countries. When discussing immigrants, instead of seeing them all as one group, we should see the heterogeneity among the immigrants. They have different backgrounds, nationalities,

languages and reasons for immigration. These reasons are typically divided into four different categories. They can be either ex-patriates returning to their birth countries, refugees, people moving after work or studies or people moving because of family reasons. Immigrants do not live evenly around Finland. Rather they have gathered near each other to specific cities and areas. Despite their heterogeneity all the immigrants encounter same kind of challenges with language, cultural differences and prejudice. (Tuittu, Klemelä, Rinne & Räsänen 2011, 9–16.)

In 2012 there were 5 426 674 people living in Finland. 3,6 % of population living in Finland were foreign citizens. 64 % of people born abroad were from Europe. In 2012 there were 195 511 foreign citizens living in Finland. 31 280 people moved to Finland in 2012. The major single immigrant groups were Estonians (39 763 inhabitants) and Russians (30 183 inhabitants). All the rest original nationalities or ethnical groups have less than 10 000 inhabitants living in Finland. 4,9 % of people are speaking foreign language. Largest foreign language group is Russian-speaking inhabitants (62 554 inhabitants). 3129 asylum seekers came to Finland in 2012 and 1601 were accepted as refugees. (Annual Review of Immigration 2012, 2–10.)

There are various different legal ways to stay in the USA. Legal permanent residents are known as *green card* recipients. They have a permanent right to live in the USA, but they are not actual U.S. citizens. After five years of living in the USA as a legal permanent resident it is possible to apply for naturalization, which means applying for citizenship. Nonimmigrant admissions refer to legal but limited period of stay in the USA. Reasons behind these admissions are usually tourism, business travel, studies, exchange programs or other work. Also the USA takes in refugees and asylees. 1 031 631 people were granted a permanent residence status in 2012. From those people 103 047 were granted a permanent residence in Florida. 58 179 refugees arrived in the USA in 2012. Most of them came from Asia and Middle East. 17 506 people were granted asylum. 757 434 people were naturalized in the USA in 2012. 100 890 of them were naturalized in Florida. 165 500 000 nonimmigrant admissions were granted in 2012. 7 234 508 nonimmigrant admissions were granted to people arriving to Florida. (Year Book of Immigration Statistics 2012, 1, 16, 57, 81.)

In 2012 there were 15 570 432 U.S. born people living in Florida. 19,4 % (3 747 136) of the people in Florida were foreign born. 15,1 % (2 358 309) of U.S. born people were from Latino origin. In the table below are presented all the foreign born people living in Florida by their region of birth. This table excludes all the people born in the USA for foreign-born parents. (Migration Policy Institute 2012.) Department of Homeland Security in the USA estimates that there were also 740 000 unauthorized people living in Florida in 2011. (Hoefer, Rytina & Baker 2012, 4.)



**TABLE 1.** Region of Birth: Foreign Born People in Florida (Migration Policy Institute 2012.)

<b>Region of Birth</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage of all foreign born</b>
Africa	64 332	1,7 %
Asia	397 712	10,5 %
Europe	374 564	10,0 %
Latin America (South America, Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean)	2 801 286	74,8 %
Northern America (Canada, Bermuda, Greenland, St. Pierre, Miquelon)	106 867	2,9 %
Oceania	7375	0,2 %

What really is important to understand is that cultures change during time and by different influences. The immigrant parents who have lived most of their life in their country of origin experience the new country differently than the children of theirs who have lived their whole life in the new country. Still, these children experience the world differently than their peers whose families have lived their whole life in the same country. (Ladson-Billings 2014, 75.) It is also notable that because of the diverse population in the USA the whites are also very diverse group by their ethnical and cultural background. Many groups and individuals of whites have been supporting social movements to increase the rights of people of color and to develop more equitable society against mainstream white American domination. (Banks 2001, 15.) Categorizing people by their looks or ways of living leads to stereotypical thinking. To develop an understanding and approbative society, it would be essential to learn to think outside of the box. That would be achieved only by listening carefully everyone's perspectives and let everyone have their own perspectives no matter what their background is.

### 4.3 OPINIONS, STANCES AND CHALLENGES

Erin Pahkle and Julie Milligan Hughes explain that children are aware of racism approximately latest in the age of ten, although the own spot in the society and own experiences have an influence on consciousness. In average 6–10 years old African American students are more aware of racism than their peers. They understand that racism means discrimination, conflicts and denigrating. Until the age of adolescence, children have gathered huge amount of information from their parents, peers, teachers and media. This is called socialization. (Pahkle & Milligan Hughes 2010, 85–87.) Sorrells, Baker, Cole and O’Raghallaigh tell that inequality can still be seen in how children are treated in the USA and how their future views are seen. Black student will graduate high school in half the cases compared to white student. There is a one third of a chance that black student will graduate college and twice the chance to unemployment when compared to a white student. Also the life expectancy of a black person is seven years less than a white person. (Sorrells, Baker, Cole & O’Raghallaigh 2010, 233–234.)

The immigrant background can bring many kinds of obstacles and challenges. Depending on the country of origin the parents may not have experience in schooling and cannot support their children in studies. Also the foreign language has its influence on absorbing new things. Despite the challenges immigrant children have an equal possibility to success well or even better in school as the children of main population. Differences in school success have many different explanations even within the children of main population. (Räsänen & Kivirauma 2011, 37–38.) Thus the immigrant background itself does not predict poor or good success. It is about how well the learning is supported and how beneficial the learning circumstances are in life as whole.

Räsänen and Kivirauma did a research in Spring 2009 about the school satisfaction of immigrant children. The data was collected by a survey from 3rd to 9th grade immigrant and Native Finnish pupils in Finland. According to the research immigrant pupils find school more meaningful on average than the pupils with the Finnish cultural background. But in whole the school is seen meaningful when all the pupils answering to the survey were taken into consideration. When focusing only on the immigrant pupils, differences behind the opinions came from very different reasons. Pupils who had studied in a school in other country before moving to Finland were the least satisfied with the school in Finland. Other factors behind the school satisfaction were amount of pupils in school with foreign language background and the language spoken at home. (Räsänen & Kivirauma 2011, 53, 63–65.)

Rinne and Tuittu (2011, 105–106) in the other hand made a research of 3rd to 9th graders’ parents’ satisfaction of their children’s school. The immigrant parents happen to be more satisfied

with the school and teachers. What was surprising is that actually immigrant parents are the ones to point out that there are too many immigrant pupils in the school. Nevertheless all the parents thought that the needs of the immigrant pupils are taken care of. (Rinne & Tuittu 2011, 110–113.) In the same research Rinne and Tuittu also researched the tolerance of parents with immigrant, Finnish cultural or bicultural background. The parents' educational level was also taken into consideration. The most tolerant parents seem to be the highly educated parents from bicultural families. The less tolerant parents were the Native Finnish parents with less educational background. The questions in the survey were about tolerance, equality, intolerance, discrimination and racism. Immigrant parents think that studying is essential to enhance the quality of life. Education is seen as an important way of fighting towards equality and employment in a society. (Rinne & Tuittu 2011, 135–138, 142–143.)

The researchers found that as an opposite to beliefs of Native Finnish parents, immigrant parents believe that the higher educated the person is, also the more tolerant the person is. More immigrant parents than Native Finnish parents believed that it does not matter what people study, instead all learning is valuable. In the other hand both immigrant and Native Finnish parents somewhat thought that there are too many highly educated people in Finland. Native Finnish parents also believed that it is possible to achieve good life with lower education as well and the real learning happens actually after studies by working. Thus even though Native Finnish parents are seen generally having a strong belief that education can enhance living conditions, the immigrant parents in this study seem to be believing that even more. (Rinne & Tuittu 2011, 135–138, 142–143.)

As a whole, children and parents, immigrants and natives seem to be considerably satisfied with school in Finland. In the other hand the USA is struggling with its long history of multiculturalism even today and the situation seems to be far from stable. For years now American teachers and students have differentiated themselves from immigrants and have felt that immigrants coming from somewhere else should be adopting the ways and standards of theirs. Misinterpretations, misunderstandings and ignorance towards differing values and standards have lead to situation where American educators have categorized immigrant groups by the definition of a good student. Immigrant student themselves are well aware of this categorizing but how they respond differs by the length of their residence. Immigrants who have just moved are more hesitant to react by any way. These presumptions that teachers make of their students influence the students image of themselves. These disapproval stances in the new country harm their confidence even more and at this already vulnerable situation. (Olneck 2004, 386–387.)

What seems like a huge step forward is that university teachers educating pre-service teachers have changed the view from examining African-American or low-income students to examining their own assumptions of students according to their personal history and background. Teacher candidates, who are mostly white and female, are pushed to reflect their own positionality in the society to understand low-income students and students of color better. (Henry 2012, 51.) In Finland teachers react mostly positively on teaching immigrant students. However some teacher tend to lower the level of requirements for immigrant students to ease their struggle with new culture and language. It seems that positive stance towards immigrant students leads to better academic achievements. In the other hand lowering the level of requirements may be harmful for cognitive development. (Virta, Räsänen & Tuittu 2011, 227.) Erin Pahkle and Julie Milligan Hughes suggest a solution to enhance the equality by three means. First of all as said before, it is essential that teacher reflects her own feelings and stances carefully. Second, curricula must be composed by taking the other cultures into account as well as the main culture. Third, differences and racism must be raised on as a discussion topic in schools too. (Pahkle & Milligan Hughes 2010, 90–91.) In conclusion both countries seem to have a lot to learn about encountering, teaching and understanding immigrant students better.

#### **4.4 MULTICULTURAL TEACHING**

Teacher's work as an educator is to support fair and balanced development and formation of students' identity. Teachers have an essential influence to keep students from not becoming marginalized and to help those who struggle with learning. They not only have a huge role on socializing immigrant students to the surrounding culture but they also need to help the students to preserve the connections to their original culture and ethnicity. Therefore to offer equal opportunities teachers need to reflect their stances and values towards different cultures and backgrounds. Multiculturalism in school has been researched fairly much in Finland. Finnish teachers see multiculturalism mostly in a positive way. On the other hand teachers feel the work has become heavier and they do not have enough knowledge and experience of working with multicultural students. Multiculturalism has being seen as a challenge but also as richness. (Virta, Räsänen & Tuittu 2011, 159–161.)

Virta, Räsänen and Tuittu (2011) present Miettinen's (2001) way to divide teachers to four different categories by the way they relate to immigrant students. Teachers' stances, values, idea of human being, multicultural knowledge and as well as the idea of learning are taken into

consideration. *Assimilative* educator has a singularistic worldview and a stereotypical stance towards immigrant students. He/she wants the students to adopt Finnish culture as soon as possible. *Routine-oriented* educator feels that teaching is exhausting, multiculturalism is a problem and immigrant students bring extra tasks for work. *Tolerant* educator is emphatic and takes care of equality in the classroom. He/she finds it important to tell immigrant students about their own culture and he/she is professionally oriented. Finally *multicultural* educator has a pluralistic worldview and individualistic idea of human being. His/her broad knowledge is a base for his/her work enhancing the students' cultural identity. (Virta, Räsänen & Tuittu 2011, 162–163.)

When considering the situation in a view of educational politics, Finland's integrative political principle can be seen even in the national curriculum. There are different means of support especially designed for immigrant students. For example in a linguistic perspective immigrant students are offered F2-education (S2 - *suomi toisena kielenä* in Finnish), which means that students study Finnish as their second language. The criterion for F2-education is based on the level of language skills not any other background factors. S2-education (R2 - *ruotsi toisena kielenä* in Finnish) means that Swedish as a second language is also possible since Swedish is the second national language in Finland. When students reach a certain level of language skills in either Finnish or Swedish, student can be transferred to a general classroom. The level of language skills is evaluated by F2/S2 -teacher and the teacher in the general classroom. Students may also have supported teaching, assistant teacher who speaks student's mother tongue and studies their own language and religion. All the students at the age of compulsory pre-primary education and basic education and whose Finnish language is not good enough for school have a possibility to attend preliminary education. There are no decrees for the student teacher minimum ratio in these cases. Therefore the studies are offered even for only one student. (Virta, Räsänen & Tuittu 2011, 164–165.)

Gloria Ladson-Billings from University of Wisconsin-Madison is an example of those who have worked hard towards more equal education system in the USA. She has focused her career on education and academic success of African-American students in the schools of the United States. Her main goal was to find out practical ways to improve teacher education by examining the success of the least successful. In her research at the beginning of the 1990's she picked eight teachers who she saw representing the type of good and influential teachers. Professionalism and skills of teachers participating in the research were measured by three categories. First the *academic success* refers to intellectual growth of children. This growth is a consequence from good classroom instructions and other learning experiences. *Cultural competence* means helping students appreciate their cultures of origin at the same time as they aim for obtaining knowledge of and fluency in the

culture they are living in. *Socio-political consciousness* in the other hand is the ability to extend the learning beyond the classroom to the real world outside the school walls. (Ladson-Billings 2014, 74–76.)

She discovered the ways these teachers thought, acted and taught in the classroom, how they took the diversity of students, their cultural backgrounds and their specific ways to learn into consideration. Her work has been widely cited and used as an approach for teaching and learning and many other scholars have continued with the theme and have deepened the study. (Ladson-Billings 2014, 74–76.) When Ladson-Billings presented the results of her research many listeners noted surprisingly that the secret is actually about good basic teaching. Ladson-Billings agreed on that but kept questioning why this kind of teaching was not seem to be appearing in most classrooms in the USA with African American students. After seeing and studying this specific type of pedagogical excellence she named this view as *culturally relevant pedagogy*. (Ladson-Billings 1995, 159–160.)

The drive for studying the teaching of African American students arose as Ladson-Billings was searching for researches about the school success of African American students. She found out that most of the studies were connected with the terms such as at-risk, underachieving and disadvantaged. There were no match between African American students and academic success. Ladson-Billings wanted to research what we actually can learn from African American students rather than what we should learn about them. Culturally relevant education is about combining the understanding of learning and culture. (Ladson-Billings 2014, 75–76.) It is about making the learning relevant. To make it relevant to everyone, cultural backgrounds need to be taken into consideration and to be made a part of instructions and learning. Those teachers who participated in Ladson-Billing's research were actually using methods of culturally relevant pedagogy and even African American students succeeded well. The teachers got students' parents involved in teaching their expertise, they paid attention to the particular personality and characteristic features typical for African American students and used the particular type of music in teaching which was meaningful for the students. (Ladson-Billings 1995, 159–160.)

In American research for multicultural education researchers seem to be pointing out the fact that all students have variable cognitive learning styles and that these should be better taken into consideration in schools. Hispanic and African American students would for example benefit from more humanistic and relational manner of learning since they are often more field-sensitive learners. Even though there has been some speculation between race and mental ability, there have been studies that race and ethnic background do not correlate with mental ability (Moore 1985 by Diaz 2001b, 7). Leftcourt (1982) has found out in his study that internal locus of control affects

positively on academic success. Leftcourt found out that since the internal locus of control is related to the feeling of capability to affect environment, students with higher socioeconomic status tend to have higher level of internal locus of control. Conversely, students with lower socioeconomic status seem to have more often external locus of control, which appears as underachieving in school. (Diaz 2001b, 7–8.)

*Culturally relevant pedagogy* has been a base for numerous ideas and researches. Now, almost 25 years after, the research Ladson-Billings states the importance of continuity and developing alongside with the on-going change of the world. If we achieve a space of certainty and surety of our practice we stop developing and that, as Ladson-Billings strongly states, means academic death to us and to the students in our presence. (Ladson-Billings 2014, 75–76.) Alim H. Samy and Paris Django (2014) state that there is an unarguably strong influence of Ladson-Billing's work in the American field of education. They are also inspired by the work of Ladson-Billing's themselves. Yet they criticize the concept of culturally relevant pedagogy for its softness. To be relevant to something does not require continuity and continuous presence of it among the people around. Instead of *relevant* they offer *sustainable*. (Alim & Paris 2014, 85–91.)

Following demographic and social change in the society, Alim and Paris demand linguistic, literate and cultural pedagogy to be a sustainable part of the schooling. The white middle-class linguistic, literate and cultural skills can no longer be the aim of schooling. Those skills have for years been seen as the way to success. Since the society is increasingly diverse, those skills will not be the key features in future. In the future it will be essential to be able to communicate with multiple English monolinguals or monoculturals instead of just the Dominant American English (DAE), which still is the standard English in American schools. In conclusion, *culturally sustainable pedagogy* means appreciation towards the practices of communities of color but it also is necessary for the growth of the nation. (Amin & Paris 2014, 85–91.) The language is one important perspective to multicultural education. In the USA English is seen as the most valuable language. Bilingualism is sometimes even seen as referring to low status in society. Many low-income and powerless people happen to be the ones who speak other languages as well as they speak English. Some teachers even think that other language is only on the way of learning English. (Nieto 2001, 154.)

However among formally educated the bilingualism is highly valued and symbol of status and power. The race, ethnicity and class of speaker unfortunately seem to have an effect on how much the bilingualism is appreciated. Illogical or not the bilingualism among poor and powerless is mostly seen as a sign of low status. English is seen as the language of power in the USA and often teachers are not aware of how to guide bilingual pupils in a proper way. They may even ask parents

to speak English at home even though it is not their mother tongue. This may be harmful for the linguistic development. Researches show that pupils who get to speak their parents' mother tongue at home tend to succeed better in school. These pupils are more likely to become fluent with both languages and that is actually an advantage for school success. (Nieto 2001, 153–158.)

Teresa L. McCarty and Tiffany S. Lee take part in the conversation by bringing the view of colonialism and Native Americans. They are worried about the position of the tribal sovereignty in the American school system. By colonialism the Western schooling has taken over the school system abstracting the Native American's not only from their lands but also from their identities, worldviews and languages. Thus McCarty and Lee suggest adding the *revitalizing* view to the concept of *culturally sustainable pedagogy*. (McCarty & Lee 2014, 102–103.)



## 5 METHODOLOGY

In this research I am aiming to find out what are Finnish emigrants views on basic education in Florida compared to their experiences in Finland. This is researched in order to find out the main differences in every day school life in Florida and in Finland. Conducting a research, researcher needs to make some methodological decisions in prior and meanwhile the research work. In this chapter I will explain in detail how the data was collected and processed in this present study and why these methodological decisions were made.

Qualitative analysis is an attempt to understand the structure of some entity. All the aspects of the issue must be explained a way that they are not in a disagreement with the interpretation. In a wider view the qualitative analysis consists of two phases: reducing the data and solving the mystery. Reducing as well consists of two phases. First one is about focusing only into the aspects, which are answering the research question made in advance. Everything else is left outside. The other one is about connecting the findings and creating groups of them. Solving the mystery means making interpretations by scrutinizing and explaining the groups of findings. (Alasuutari 2011, 38–40, 44.)

To separate the findings from data a suitable method must first be chosen. Because it is distinctive for qualitative research to observe the data from varying angles, which cannot be predicted, it is also understandable that strict theoretical frame cannot be ensured in advance. Thus qualitative research goes for collecting that kind of data, which is as wide as possible for examination from different perspectives. The idealistic view is that the data is naturally occurring; it actually exists even without the research. To collect the most idealistic data would mean observing in a way that the target would not be disturbed at all. That is not always possible or even appropriate for solving the specific mystery and therefore other ways to collect data are used in qualitative research as well. Main thought is nevertheless to disturb the target as little as possible and to collect as multi-leveled, rich and complex data as possible. (Alasuutari 2011, 82–84.)

In summary, the research work begins with ideas and interests of the researcher, continues with defining, limiting and focusing the research questions and settings, choosing the appropriate methods and suitable way for analysis, familiarizing oneself with the theory behind the subject in hand and concludes with the writing process. (eg. Alasuutari 2011, 31–54, 77–89; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2013, 17–26, 71–123, 150–164.) In my opinion and experience after getting a functional

idea and defining the settings everything else goes rather naturally until the real writing process begins. During the writing process new ideas and problems occur in mind occasionally and the researcher can even experience moments of total disbelief and despair. These feelings are all part of the process and are leading to better understanding and knowledge of the subject.

## **5.1 METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

A research is always based on assumptions that are often concealed. These assumptions are called scientific basic assumptions and commitments. Understanding these basic aspects of philosophy of science is essential for reasonable justifications and explanations in the research. That also assists in understanding the difference between qualitative and quantitative research better. Behind every philosophical approach there are four different fields of philosophy. These fields are ontology, epistemology, logics and teleology. Ontology and epistemology are the most essential viewpoints. Ontological questions seek answers for how the target of the research is seen and understood by that particular philosophical aspect. Epistemological questions speculate which methods to collect the data are the most reliable and sensitive ways to approach the target. Logics in the other hand are about the possible causalities between different parts of the information. Finally teleological questions which are about reasoning the whole research. Why is the research done? What new information could it bring us? (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2013, 129–131.) These philosophical questions are included as a relevant part in the process in doing a convincing research.

The ontological perspective of hermeneutic phenomenology supports my belief and idea of human being. I believe that we all are different and the concept of normality is impossible to define. Although we live in different kinds of environments, situations and cultural contexts, we all still are the same, yet different. There are many ways to do things. By truly listening each other, questioning our previous experiences and building the new understanding on our pre-understanding we can achieve mutual understanding and develop our own habits and ways of doing things. The epistemological perspective for my research arose from my personal need to understand better the different ways of doing things in educational field, which can be extended to wider use and benefit. I believe that by listening and understanding the different experiences we can maintain the good quality of our own educational system and keep it along with the dynamic development of the world. In my case I want to know which ways of doing things especially the people from Finnish background found the most suitable or desirable in Floridian school system while they watched the new culture with the Finnish cultural background.

Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) has often been called as the creator of phenomenology. At the beginning of his career Husserl focused on mathematics, but soon got interested in philosophy and ended up changing his career path. (Lavery 20013, 3–4.) That is the reason why Husserlian way of phenomenology is often referred as philosophical phenomenology. He focused more on study of essences and transcendental structures of consciousness. (Henriksson & Friesen 2012, 2.) Husserl criticized the way psychology tried to use the same methods in research as natural science. He did not believe that those methods could be applied on human issues since it was about living subjects that do not react automatically and in regular way. Rather the reactions have huge variety of variables behind them and the context must be taken into consideration as well. Husserl believed that the true meaning could be found through phenomenology by getting deeper into reality. Thus Husserl was actually answering to the debate between qualitative and quantitative research methods in social sciences by attempting to create an approach of scientific philosophy that he believed to be even more reliable view on researching human beings. (Lavery 20013, 3–4.)

The man behind the hermeneutic phenomenology is said to be Martin Heidegger (1889–1976). Heidegger started his career with theology but changed his focus soon into philosophy in similar way as Husserl. Husserl and Heidegger worked together in Freiberg, Germany. Husserl was the one who got Heidegger into phenomenology. After Husserl's retirement Heidegger got a professorship and started developing his own pathway of phenomenology. Heidegger believed that the consciousness is actually the base of lived experience and it consists of the whole history and the culture behind human being. He also believed that the understanding is the way we are. It is the essential thing that makes us human. Although the whole history and background behind the individual can not be made totally visible that determines the way the world is seen and understood. (Lavery 20013, 7–9.)

Hans-Georg Gadamar (1900-2002) was a student and professor of philosophy. During studies he familiarized himself for both Husserls' and Heidegger's work. In Gadamar's view understanding takes place in interpreting. Interpretation is a combination of different kinds of views or a horizon as he called it. The horizon means that the person, the interpreter, observes the issue in a wider perspective. Questioning creates the new horizons and understanding and it is in a very important role in the interpretation process. Thus the interpreter is in a questioning dialog between his own expectations and the meaning of the text. (Lavery 2013, 9–11.)

Phenomenology is about the lived experience, but to understand the experiences we need to do interpretations. Understanding is about interpreting and that is the purpose of hermeneutics. Behind understanding there is always what is understood before. Understanding is always built on pre-understanding and that creates a hermeneutic circle. The target in hermeneutic

phenomenological research is to conceptualize the subject in hand, the meaning of lived experience. Things that have become routine and inconspicuous by everyday life are attempted to make visible again. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2013, 34–35.)

I am looking for every day school life differences between Finland and Florida. But I am interested in going deeper with this subject than just the facts and details. I believe in the idea of hermeneutic circle that all understanding is built on pre-understanding. That is the reason why I ended up interviewing Finnish parents who have studied in Finland and whose children are studying now in Florida. They see the differences through their Finnish background and pre-understanding. Also being in a new situation and environment they see the normal every day life things in a new light rather than routinely when compared to parents who don't have the multicultural background. This approach to my research also brings up an interesting multicultural perspective.

It is essential that researcher acknowledges the effect of his/her own pre-understanding and attempts to enhance the hermeneutic circle. That happens in interaction between the researcher and the data. Researcher is aiming to understand the data more deeply and is aiming to correct the own interpretations over and over again while analyzing the data. Researcher must be able to acknowledge and question the first interpretation that occurs in mind. Before analyzing the researcher should familiarize with the theoretical preconceptions and aim to move them aside. (Laine 2010, 34–37.) In this case I as a researcher need to understand especially my Finnish cultural and educational background. I have to be aware of my pre-understanding and preconceptions and attempt to put them aside while analyzing the data to avoid their influence on conclusions and results.

## **5.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

Doing a research is full of choices and decisions. First one must specify the setting of the research problem. Then the philosophical and theoretical aspects of the study and also the methods to collect data must be chosen. But above all, the approach of the research must be selected. That approach is the base that guides through the process. In other words the strategy for the research must be chosen and clarified in the beginning of the process. One strategy is not necessarily better than other, but it must be understood that the research will be different when it is made with different approaches. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2004, 123–124.)

It is said that qualitative research does not prioritize different kinds of methodological practices; rather it consists of many different but equal views of methodological aspects. Qualitative

research is actually a set of versatile interpretive practices and it is used in many different and separate disciplines. The research field is mostly seen in human disciplines. A lot of variable empirical materials are used in qualitative research including case study, personal experience, introspection, life story, interview, artifacts and various historical, observational, interactional and visual texts. Qualitative researchers use huge variety of multiple interpretative practices to achieve better understanding on the subject that is being under focus. (Denzin & Lincoln 2011, 3–6.)

Although qualitative and quantitative are research approaches that are not easy to separate and they should be seen more as supplementing each other than competing, qualitative research encounters sometimes criticism from politicians and other scientists (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2013, 136). Occasionally it is claimed to be subjective, unscientific, "soft science." Positivists claim that qualitative researchers write fiction and cannot prove their statements true. On the other hand it is seen that by this attack positivist are even trying to legislate their view over others. (Denzin & Lincoln 2011, 2.) The wide-range of qualitative methods and methodological aspects makes the phrase *qualitative research* hard to determine. In different parts of the world the qualitative traditions vary and new aspects are developed all the time. (Denzin & Lincoln 2011, 8.)

However what is common between all the aspects, qualitative researchers believe that by the qualitative methods for example detailed interviewing and observation the researchers get closer to the subject's perspective. In a close connection to the real world qualitative researchers are more likely to get more information of the real social life. Quantitative researchers usually stay in more abstract level with the subject matter in hand. (Denzin & Lincoln 2011, 9.) In my experience this difference becomes quickly apparent while doing research. In my studies I have used both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The data for my Bachelor's Thesis was quantitatively collected and analyzed by statistical methods. The data was easy to collect and the response rate was good. A desirable overview of the subject was achieved, but it certainly felt that I was dealing more with papers and facts than with the participants' real thoughts. Since my focus is in the field of education, it feels essential and meaningful to get closer to the people's mind. That convinced me to use qualitative approach in the research.

What separates the qualitative research from quantitative is the way the data is collected. Qualitative research does not examine or measure the meanings rather it focuses on the quality of entity. The big question is "how." How the process happened? How the experience was created? How the meaning was determined? Quantitative research instead is studying the quantities, measurements and causalities between variables. (Denzin & Lincoln 2011, 8.) Qualitative research is holistic data collection in natural real-life situations. Since the voice of a human being is the main focus of qualitative research the methods used are chosen by this particular view. The focus group

is chosen in advance for some specific reason rather than randomly. The research plan develops, changes and takes shape during the whole process. All the research cases are seen as unique and that gives also a certain view for analyzing the data. The analysis is inductive. Testing some particular hypothesis is not the meaning of the research neither the researcher is the one determining what is important. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2013, 164.)

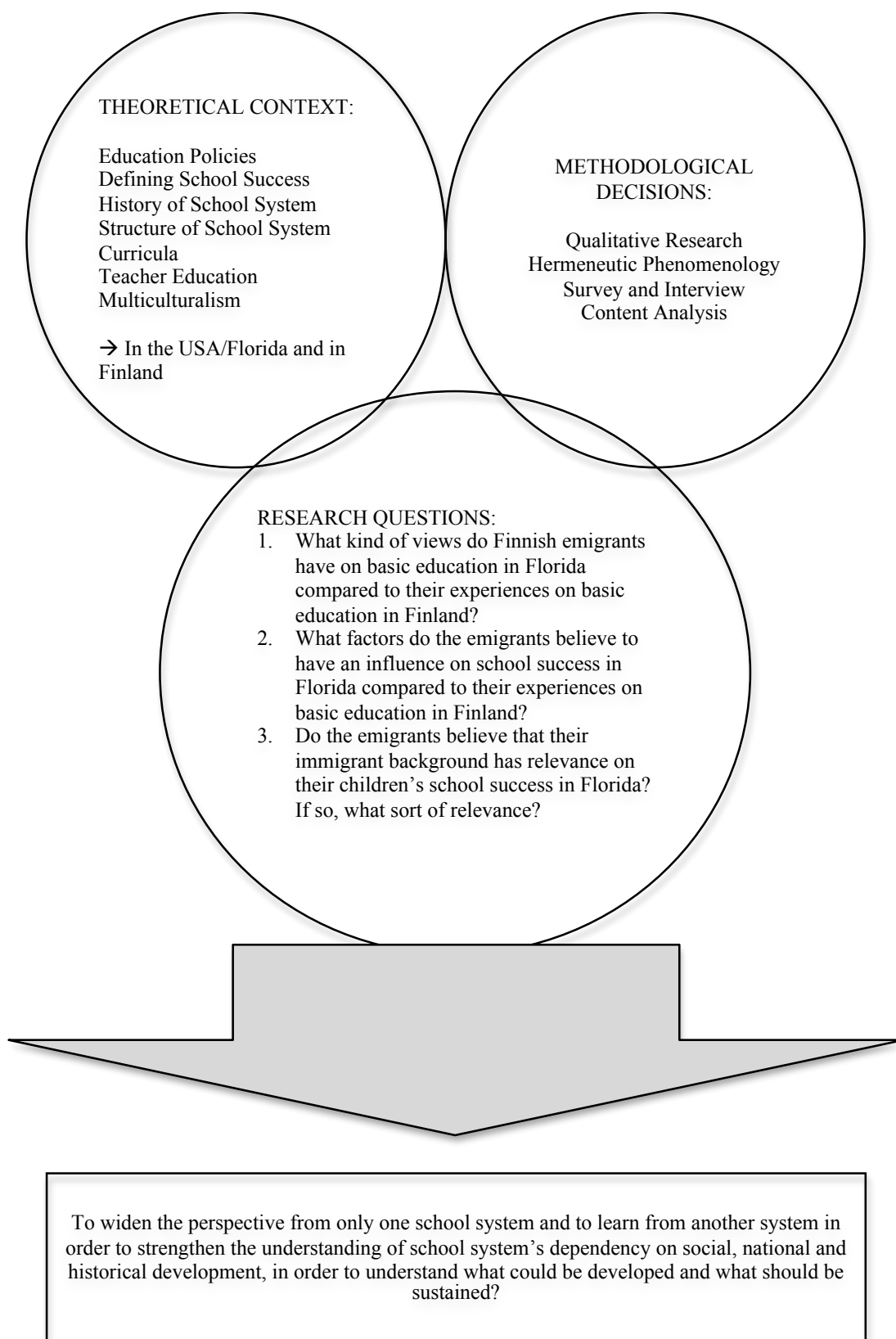
If the qualitative research field consists of a huge variety of different approaches and perspectives so does the hermeneutic phenomenology itself. On the background there is the belief of uncertainty and controversy, which is distinctive to qualitative research. During times philosophers of phenomenology have had their own ways to understand and develop this scientific philosophical approach. But what has been agreeable is that the main concern is to focus on meanings that are embodied and experiential. (Finlay 2012, 17.)

### **5.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The aim is to find out what kind of views do Finnish emigrants have on basic education in Florida on practical level and according to the experiences of their children. These views are asked by conducting answerers to compare their views on their own experiences of basic education in Finland. By the philosophical approach of hermeneutic phenomenology behind the research, answerers' views and opinions are in any case built on their previous experience. In this research this pre-knowledge is aimed to be gained benefit from. Second aim is to clarify which things do the emigrants believe to have an influence on school success in Florida compared to their experiences in Finland? Third aim is to find out do the Finnish emigrants believe that their immigrant background has a relevance on their children's school success and if that is the case, what sort of relevance has it? The main aspects of the research are clarified in the Figure 1.

#### **Research questions:**

1. What kind of views do Finnish emigrants have on basic education in Florida compared to their experiences on basic education in Finland?
2. What factors do the emigrants believe to have an influence on school success in Florida compared to their experiences on basic education in Finland?
3. Do the emigrants believe that their immigrant background has relevance on their children's school success in Florida? If so, what sort of relevance?



**FIGURE 1.** The main aspects of the research

## 5.4 DATA COLLECTION

In January 2014 I made a field trip to Florida to collect data for the research. Data for the research is collected by interview and by survey. Interview is one of the most used ways to collect information. Our society can actually be called an interview society. This is quite plausible since asking is the primary way to get information in every day social life. Interview is an important way of interaction in many professions like reporter, doctor, policeman, psychologist and so on. (Tiittula & Ruusuvuori 2005, 9.)

I sent a link to an internet based survey by e-mail together with a cover letter explaining the purpose of the research altogether to 51 possible answerers. I chose the internet based survey because it is an easy and fast way to reach as many answerers as possible and it also saves time. There is always a risk with surveys that the answering percentage ends up low, thus for the reliability of the survey I wanted additionally interview some parents who were willing to answer by interview instead of the survey. I added my contact information to the cover letter and told the possible answerers that I was going to be on a field trip in Florida in January 2014. I was reached by a few answerers addressing their interest in delivering the link of the survey to other possible answerers they knew. By the end of January 2014 I received 18 filled surveys by the parents and I had interviewed 5 interviewees. In addition I received 2 surveys, which were filled by adults who told that they themselves had studied in both Finland and Florida.

From all the 25 answerers only two have completed their basic education before the time of Finnish Comprehensive School. All the rest have studied if not the whole period of basic education at least some years of it during the new comprehensive school system. 17 parents told that their children are still studying and 4 parents told that all their children have completed basic education and graduated from high school. Both of the two children answering to the survey have already completed basic education. The table 2 below shows that the answerers are quite evenly between ages 25 and 52. The table 3 below, also shows that almost all except one answerer have lived in Florida more than six years. Yet again answerers have lived quite evenly somewhat between 6 and 24 years in Florida.



**TABLE 2.** Age range of the answerers

<b>Age of the answerer</b>	<b>Amount of answerers</b>
25–31	3
32–37	1
38–42	2
43–47	4
48–52	7
52 +	3
Unknown	5

**TABLE 3.** Years lived in Florida by the answerers

<b>Years lived in Florida</b>	<b>Amount of answerers</b>
0–5	1
6–11	4
12–17	5
18–23	7
24 +	4
Unknown	4

The target group for my research was chosen because my own experiences and knowledge on Florida. Former teacher of my contact preschool in Florida was kind enough to let me use all her contacts to reach the target group. I limited the group for my research to Finnish emigrants who had personally gone through Finnish basic education and whose children in the other hand had studied in Florida. Therefore the answerers had the their own cultural perspective from Finland which they inexorably use while viewing and dealing with their children’s basic education in Florida. I started planning my research in November 2013 and familiarizing myself with the theoretical context. The survey was prepared by the end of December 2013. The survey was based on the research problems and contained four different categories. First there were questions concerning basic information

about the answerers. Three other categories were about *differences in practical level*, *school success* and *multiculturalism*. The categories *practical differences* and *school success* contained open questions with clarifications of terms used. *Practical differences* contained three different questions with a list of examples to consider. *School success* contained two questions with a clarification on how the term school success is seen in this research. *Multiculturalism* -category contained two statements with a free space for own view on statement.

In addition to Finnish immigrants living in Florida, two professors of education, one from each country, were interviewed to widen the perspective and to strengthen the reliability of the research. One often used method to collect data for qualitative research is interview. (Fontana & Frey 2003, 74.) Generally interview is one of the most used and common ways to collect information in our society. Our society can actually be called an “interview society”. This is quite plausible since asking is the primary way to get information in every day social life. Interview is an important way of interaction in many professions like reporter, doctor, policeman, psychologist and so on. (Tiittula & Ruusuvuori 2005, 9.) But how easy it may sound it is much more difficult to plan and do an interview than it may seem at first since all words have so many variable meanings. (Fontana & Frey 2003, 61.)

There are many reasons why interview is so popular method among qualitative researchers. First of all the person answering to the questions is seen as a subject with an active role in the situation. Person must be provided a situation where it is possible to answer as freely as possible. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2013, 204–207.) While collecting data for my Master’s Thesis the interviewees had also a possibility to choose the place and time for the interview by themselves to make the answering as easy and comfortable as possible. All the answerers were given a chance to familiarize themselves to the subject and questions beforehand. If the field of the research is less-known researcher does not know the ways the interview is going to take beforehand or the field is so wide that it is known beforehand that the interview is going to produce multilateral and multi-way answers.

Sometimes all the expressions and gestures are in an essential role for the results. The researcher might want to deepen or clarify the information with additional questions. If needed it is usually possible to make contact with the interviewed people afterwards. Some of the advantages of interview can also be seen as disadvantages. The intimate situation may lead the interviewee to give socially acceptable answers. These vary between different cultures and contexts. It is important that the researcher can pay attention to these differences. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2013, 204–207.)

The interview must be started and ended by certain polite every day life manners. Most important thing would be to create easy and confidential relationship to the interviewee and make it clear that the interviewer is interested in the answers and opinions by the interviewee. The interviewer must balance between showing enough empathy and still keeping the roles between the researcher and the interviewee in mind. The researcher should stay neutral, sententious and detached to not influence the answers. Nevertheless some additional questions may motivate the interviewee and produce more detailed and longer answers. (Ruusuvuori & Tiittula 24, 40–45.)

Choosing between structured and unstructured interview is about what sort of a data would be wanted or needed. Structured interview seeks answers that are clear and structured so that they fit under categories, which are determined before having an interview. Unstructured interview on the other hand is more about understanding the complexity of human behavior without limitations of specific questions. But the line between unstructured and structured is not always totally clear and different situations and settings have their own limitations. (Fontana & Frey 2003, 74–75.)

For example a type of interview called theme interview is something in between structured and unstructured interview. There are usually just a few basic themes, which are decided beforehand and they create the base for the interview. Structured interview follows an order of questions written on a form. Unstructured interview in turn has many ways and names. Sometimes it is called an open interview since it does not have any detailed structure. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2013, 208–210.) The questionnaire behind my surveys and interviews was in between structured and unstructured. The questions were all open except the ones clarifying the background information. But all the questions were somewhat specific although they gave a possibility to answer as freely as wanted. The reason for making these types of questions was that I wanted to make sure that the answerers were thinking the subject as widely as possible.

The survey is standardized and the answerers form a sample from a specific type of a group. The questions asked are the same for every answerer and are asked in a same way. Just like interview the survey may be more or less structured. How a survey differs from an interview is that it is commonly used in a quantitative research as well. The advantage of the survey is that it can be sent for even thousands of answerers in a same form. It is very sustainable and fast way to collect information. There are some disadvantages in survey as well that need to be taken into consideration before choosing the suitable method for a certain research. It is not possible to know how seriously the answerers have taken the answering of the questionnaire. Misunderstandings will not come out as clear and can even be left unnoticed. There is no possibility to ask additional questions or to give additional information when something is not understood. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2013, 193–195.)

The tempt to leave the questionnaire unfilled is also bigger and some percentage is always left unanswered from the whole amount of sent questionnaires. The answers for written questionnaires may sometimes be sententious and quickly made. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2013, 72–74.) This proved to be true in my research, since the answers to my interviews tended to be much wider and longer than the answers to my survey. Even though the survey is an easy and fast way to collect information the planning of the questionnaire takes some time and requires a good amount of background information (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2013, 195). Background information is essential to make a functional questionnaire. In my case the background information came from my own experiential and educational history. But as stated before for the reliable results these preconceptions must be left aside while analyzing the data.

Nowadays internet has become more common way to collect data. That is plausible since the people use more and more internet everyday. But when deciding between internet and mail surveys the researcher needs to consider the habits of the target group. Using the internet is more common for some people than others. (Valli 2010, 113.) Especially my target group is very familiar in using internet. While planning my research I assumed that despite the age the internet is nowadays the most common way to stay in contact with people living abroad. Considering this assumption I decided to collect the data by internet survey and that turned out to be a good decision.

## **5.5 ANALYZING DATA**

Content analysis is often used especially in qualitative researches but it is not only a qualitative analysis method instead it is often used in quantitative analysis. By the content analysis it is possible to analyze the data objectively and systematically. But the qualitative and quantitative approaches for content analysis differ from each other. The quantitative way is seen more as categorizing the content statistically and qualitative way as analyzing and explaining the content verbally. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2013; 93, 103–108). Basically the content analysis is just a way to put the findings in order and ready for making conclusions. The researcher must be careful not to just present the list of findings and to leave the research appearing unfinished. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2013, 103.)

Miles and Huberman (1994) describe the content analysis as a three-phased. The first phase is about reducing the data. That is when all irrelevant material is cut off. Reducing might mean the data is either tightened up or split in pieces. The second phase is about clustering the data. All original expressions are read thoroughly and sought for similarities. The expressions describing the

same subject are clustered and categorized under their own group or theme. The clustering is about summarizing the data and also clarifying the expressions concerning the main subject of the research. The third phase is abstracting which means creating theoretical concepts. At this phase the original expressions from the data are used to create theoretical concepts and conclusions. Creating the concepts and connecting the classifications is done as long as it is possible considering the data. The content analysis is about interpretation and summarizing. The empirical data is lead towards a more conceptual view. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2013, 108–113).

## **5.6 ETHICAL CONCERNS**

Ethical aspects must be taken into consideration as well while doing a research. The ethical aspects of research are highly relevant to credibility of the research. The credibility comes from following the scientifically accepted practices. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2013, 132–133.) All the data collecting and research principals are approved with wide agreement. Instead the socio-ethical aspects have caused more discussion and debate. In which extent science and research are responsible for society of using the information and consequences of the research? The ethical committees of universities do not pay that much attention to the research work of the basic degree students. Therefore the students are not assumed to be in responsible of wide-range problems. Nevertheless it is essential to pay attention to the ethical aspects starting from the first research. This leads to making consciously made and ethically justified decisions and to avoid all the dishonesty in research work. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2004, 26–28.)

There are certain things that create the base for ethicalness of the research. The researcher must have an informed consent for participating in the research from all participants of the research. That means that the participants must be given the information what is going to be happening with and during the research. The consent must be voluntary and made under proper understanding. The human dignity must be the main consideration. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2013, 23–25.) All the data collected must be used only to the meaning it was originally collected for. Otherwise a new permission must be asked from the participants. All the participants have a right to forbid using the data at any point the research is still under process. The information is always confidential and can not be given to outsiders. Most of all the research is seen as unethical if it causes any kind of harm to the participants. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2013, 131–133.)

While collecting the data for my thesis I first approached the participants with a letter that explained all the main details of the research. The letter covered the details of confidentiality, what

is the purpose of the research, when is the data collected and where is the thesis published. The participants were also given a possibility to ask any additional questions via e-mail straight from the researcher. Since the subject of the research can be considered as not too sensitive and personal, the participants were eager to take part in research. However the Finnish community in Florida is fairly small. The confidentiality and privacy needed to be taken care of and all answerers had a chance to stay anonymous.

## **5.7 RELIABILITY**

While doing a research all errors are tried to be avoided. Despite that reliability and validity are varying. Near the finishing point of the research it is important to evaluate them. There are different ways to measure the levels of reliability and validity. Reliability means basically how repeatable the research is. In other words if the same subject is researched twice the results should be the same both times. Validity evaluates that is the method of research suitable for this research context? The terms “reliability” and “validity” are originally from the field of quantitative research. That is why they are sometimes seen unsuitable for qualitative research. Especially in a case study, a typical qualitative research strategy, which is often, claimed so unique and original way of research that one cannot fit the concept of validity in it. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2013, 231–233.)

Nevertheless, the reliability, trustworthiness of the research, should be noted and evaluated somehow. One way to endorse that is to explain all phases of the research in detail. For example in the interview situation it is important to describe the situation and circumstances. While doing the interpretation it is essential to explain, argue and give reasons for the conclusions. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2013, 231–233.) It is important to evaluate and explain what is the meaning of the research and why are these specific participants chosen? Why is the research important for the researcher? How long was the whole research process? Why can this research be considered reliable? Which methods were chosen for analysis and why? (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2013, 140–141.)

There are some ways to enhance the validity of research. One of the ways is to ensure the researcher has enough time for the whole process. Time prevents mistakes and makes sure the process is done carefully. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2013, 142–143.) “Triangulation” might be used in the research. Denzin was the first to use this phrase in 1970. Denzin divided triangulation in four different types. Methodological triangulation means that different kinds of methods are used in one research. Researcher triangulation means that more than one researcher participates in collecting and analyzing the data. Theoretical triangulation in the other hand means that the research is

approached in the viewpoints of different theories. Finally in data triangulation different kinds of data is collected for the research. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2013, 231–233.) Also multi-triangulation is possible. That means that different triangulations are used in one research. Originally the meaning of triangulation was thought to be comparing the superiority of different methods. Nowadays it's meaning is seen as giving more width and depth to the research rather than finding the ultimate truth. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2013, 144–145.) For example to give my research more depth and width and to enhance the reliability of my Master's Thesis I used triangulation for my data collecting. The data was collected from eighteen participants by a survey and from five participants by an interview. I also interviewed professor Carlos Diaz from the Florida Atlantic University (10 January 2014) and professor Marita Mäkinen (27 May 2014) from the University of Tampere to widen the perspective and to enhance the trustworthiness of the research. The method used for these interviews was a theme interview. The themes used in the interview are attached to this research (Annex 3 & 4).

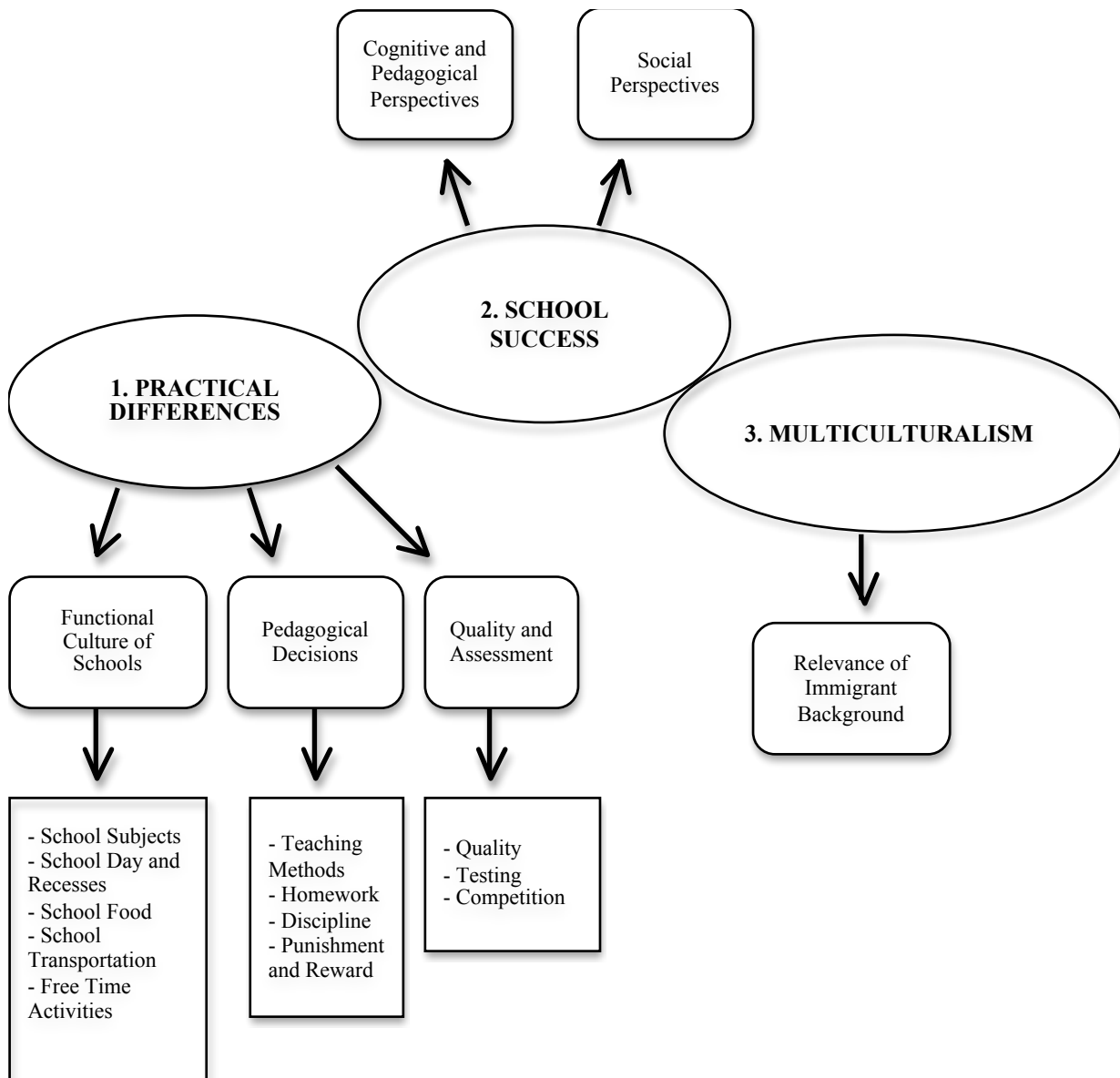
## 6 FINDINGS

There are three main sections in the survey, which create the three main categories for the research. These categories are formed by the research questions. The categories are *practical differences*, *school success* and *multiculturalism* (Figure 2). Findings of these categories are presented in this chapter. In this study I use codes PA, IN and CH. PA means answerer of the survey, a parent who has studied in Finland and whose children have studied in Florida and IN means an interviewee. CH means a child who has studied in both Finland and Florida. Even though those two answerers are already adults I separate them from parents by calling them children, because they have moved to Florida as children with their Finnish parent/s. The codes used in the analysis are listed in the Table 4 below. 23 answerers chose to answer in Finnish and two answerers wanted to answer in English. The Finnish citations presented in this chapter are carefully translated to English by trying to use as exact expressions as possible.

**TABLE 4.** The codes used in the analysis

<b>Informants</b>	<b>Code for analysis</b>	<b>Number of informants</b>
A parent who has studied in Finland and whose children have studied in Florida	PARENT  Informants:  PA1–PA18	18
An interviewee	INTERVIEWEE  Informants:  IN19–IN23	5
A child who has studied in both Finland and Florida	CHILD  Informants:  CH24–CH25	2





**FIGURE 2.** The categories of findings

## 6.1 PRACTICAL DIFFERENCES

This chapter focuses on the first category of the findings. In the first category, *practical differences*, three different questions were included in the survey:

1. Do Finnish and Floridian basic education differ by the things mentioned below? If they do, how?
  - a) the subjects taught in school
  - b) teaching methods
  - c) quality of teaching

- d) evaluation of learning
  - e) other practical things
2. How would you describe Floridian basic education in practical level (school food, discipline, competition, school transportation, homework, school organized free time activities etc.)?
  3. How would you describe Finnish basic education on practical level (school food, discipline, competition, school transportation, homework, school organized free time activities etc.)?

The questions and examples in the survey were created by the theoretical context behind the research and also according to the researchers own knowledge of schooling in overall. They were originally divided into *primary pedagogical perspectives of schooling* (Question No.1) and to *the supporting and limiting factors of schooling* (Questions No. 2 & 3). However the first category raised a lot of views and opinions on answerers in many ways. Some new issues and factors were also brought up. This led to categorizing the answers in the first section in a new way. This categorization is used in this chapter. After the new categorizing three different perspectives were created. These are *functional culture of schools*, *pedagogical decisions* and *quality and assessment* (Figure 2).

### 6.1.1 FUNCTIONAL CULTURE OF SCHOOLS

#### *School Subjects*

Most of the answerers are merely listing the differences of school subjects in Finland and in Florida rather than giving clear opinions. The answers are listed in the Table 5 below. Seventeen answerers (n=17) state that in Finland there are more different school subjects than in Florida. Some of these answerers explain that Floridian subjects *social studies* and *science* cover several Finnish subjects. However four answerers (n=4) tell that all the main subjects are the same in both countries.

*“in Finland starting from third grade I had many subjects almost 20 (e.g. social sciences and science are separated in different subjects: history, religion, geography, biology, etc.); here there are maximum of 7 subjects at the time (English, math, science, social studies, physical education, electives (art, music, computer, etc))” (PA 3)*

*“In the USA all basic studies are under Social Studies and all science studies under Science, they are not separated until High School.” (PA11)*

*“Quite the same as in Finland” (PA13)*

Eleven (n=11) from all answerers mentioned that arts and physical education are not included to the curriculum, school has only a little emphasis on them or that it depends on school if they are taught or not.

*“Less physical education and less arts. Focus more on academic studies. [in Florida]” (PA10)*

*“and then one thing which is a huge difference in depending on schools here is that in Finland music and physical education are in every schools like a standard class but here it is very limited and depends on schools” (IN5)*

Seven answerers (n=7) mentioned that foreign languages are taught in Finland earlier than in Florida. Five answerers (n=5) told that religion is not a school subject in Florida. Some private schools are exceptions since they may have religious views.

*“less subjects. not much foreign languages except in private schools where you can study them already in elementary school [in Florida]” (PA16)*

*“in public schools religion is not taught, private schools are a different issue – in many Floridian schools they are taken” (PA2)*

Although most of the answerers just listed the differences, some answerers gave opinions on school subjects. For example three of the answerers thought that Finnish school system gives a wider array of basic knowledge and skills.

*“I felt like my peers [in Finland] had been exposed to a wider array of knowledge and skills than I had.” (CH25)*

*“In Florida in my opinion lessons did not give so wide basic knowledge than in Finnish schools” (PA8)*

**TABLE 5.** School subjects

School Subjects				
More Different School Subjects in Finland n=17	No Religion in Public Schools in Florida n=5	Studying Foreign Languages Starts Earlier in Finland n=7	Less Arts and Physical Education in Florida n=11	High Variation of Emphasis on School Subjects Between Schools n=6

### ***School Day and Recesses***

School day and recesses were also mentioned in several answers. These are listed in the Table 6. Five answerers (n=5) bring up the length of the day. In their opinion school days in Florida are longer than school days in Finland. This is seen in negative way, like pushing for better results too early in life (n=3).

*“well days are a lot longer here than in Finland they were and they still are and in my opinion they expect so much more from them starting from when they are little and in the end like in the results I don’t think it shows anywhere like the pressure is much harder from the beginning and in the end sometimes it feels like the whole thing is falling apart because they are being pressured so much” (IN20)*

*“I could say that the school day has been long from the beginning – seven hours I think it is terribly long – I find it negative” (IN21)*

*“Also, the school days were varying and much shorter than in Florida. It was difficult to adjust to a 6-7 hour school day here [in Florida], while my longest ones in Finland were only 4 hours. I feel like a lot of time is wasted during the day here, and parents just consider it free child-care.” (CH24)*

Three answerers (n=3) also think that school day in Finland is planned and organized in a better way than in Florida.

*“Finnish school day is planned in a better way, child gets more variation” (PA2)*

*“In my memory Finnish schools are more organized” (PA8)*

Nine (n=9) answerers mention that there are less recesses between lessons in Florida than in Finland. One (n=1) answerer also add that the lessons are even 90 minutes long and that is in her opinion too long period of time.

*“No recesses, approx. 4 min time to change the floor and class. A big hassle [in Florida].” (PA18)*

*“In Finland there are regular recesses, there is a clear school timetable system in Finland anyway too.” (PA17)*

*“recesses are absolute winner when thinking about how well the child manages through the day [in Finland].” (PA2)*

*“I liked having recess multiple times during the day [in Finland].” (CH1)*

*“there is no recess and then the lessons are horribly long that it might be like one and a half hours like reading or like one and a half hours of science in a row and like we know it’s only that fifteen minutes that they really can learn [in Florida]” (IN19)*

**TABLE 6.** School day and recesses

School Day and Recesses			
Longer school day in Florida than in Finland n=5	School day organized better in Finland n=3	Less recesses in Florida than in Finland n=9	Too long lessons in Florida n=1

### ***School Food***

School food caused a lot of opinions on answerers. Only one (n=1) answerer of all 25 answerers did not mention school food at all. The answerers about school food in Florida are presented in the Table 7. Nine answerers (n=9) mentioned the price of the food. These nine also explain that you have to pay for food in Florida. Four of them (n=4) mentioned that the food price may be reduced or it might be free for low-income students.

*“School food is chargeable, [in Florida]” (PA11)*

*“Depending on your income school food is chargeable (\$2.25/day), reduced lunch or free. [in Florida]” (PA1)*

Twelve answerers (n=12) tell that in their opinion the quality of school food in Florida is bad. Four answerers (n=4) think that the quality has improved in the last few years. Two (n=2) answerers are satisfied with the quality of food in Florida. Three answerers (n=3) mention that the quality varies

between schools. Two of the answerers (n=2) also tell that there are different kinds of options in school restaurants, healthier and unhealthier, but young children are likely to choose the unhealthier options.

*“School food is total junk food compared to the Finnish healthy food. I haven’t ever understood why every Friday is a pizza day..” (PA8)*

*“Nobody in America understands good food and not many gets real nutrition.” (PA3)*

*“Quality has improved in just past few years” (PA1)*

*“School food depends on school, but is eatable, chargeable [in Florida].” (PA11)*

*“School food: too many options - children always choose the unhealthiest option; pizzas and hot dogs [in Florida].” (PA10)*

Seven answerers (n=7) tell that they pack the lunch to go with the children in Florida. Two of these answerers (n=2) told that reason for that is that their children do not think that the food is good enough in school. One answerer (n=1) explains that the lines are so long in school restaurant and the lunch break so short that there is no time to buy and eat the school lunch.

*“if I cite our children which have never eaten school food you can not eat it I pack their lunches they both have their own thermo bottles in which you make the food [in Florida]” (IN20)*

*“It is common that children bring their own food to school because the lines in school restaurant are so long and there is not much time [in Florida].” (PA16)*

**TABLE 7.** School food in Florida

<b>School Food in Florida</b>				
Need to pay for food in Florida n=9	Food in Florida is bad quality n=12	Satisfied with the food in Florida n=2	Quality varies between schools n=3	Pack children's lunch to go n=7
Reduced price or free for low income families n=5	Quality has increased in few past years n=4		Healthy options available, but children choose badly n=2	Because: - children do not like the food quality in school n=2 - lines are too long compared to time n=1

Thirteen (n=13) answerers state that school food in Finland is healthy and has a good or even excellent quality. Five of these answerers (n=5) add that as a child they did not realize to appreciate the quality. Three answerers mentioned (n=3) that school food is free in Finland. Two answerers (n=2) brought up the eating manners. In their opinion the lunch break in Finland is also a lesson for students to learn good manners and to use a fork and a knife. The answers concerning the school food in Finland are concluded in the Table 8.

*“School food was good, healthy [in Finland]” (PA6)*

*“School food was nutritious, it was always complained about, but free [in Finland].” (PA1)*

*“School lunch was more like a teaching in Finland: eating manners and behavior not to forget the healthiness of the food.” (PA6)*

*“Free food for everybody [In Finland].” (PA9)*

**TABLE 8.** School food in Finland

School Food in Finland			
Good or excellent quality  n=13	Free lunch  n=3	Did not appreciate as a child as much as they think they should have  n=5	School lunch is also about teaching manners  n=2

***School Transportation***

21 answerers from all 25 answerers answered the question concerning school transportation. The answers concerning school transportation are presented first (Table 9) and then the answers concerning Finland (Table 10). Nine answerers (n=9) told that the school bus system is free in Florida, but the opinions on the operability were differing. Eleven answerers (n=11) told that they drive their children in schools by themselves.

*“here [in Florida] schools offer transportation for every child” (IN19)*

*“we have always given ride by ourselves [in Florida]” (IN20)*

The reasons mentioned are that school is either too far from home and the transportation was not included anymore (n=1), the school was too close and the student did not have a right for the transportation (n=1) or the school was private and did not offer transportation (n=1). One answerer (n=1) told that they drive their children to the school, because the school is located near their work. Most popular reason mentioned was that the transportation would take so long because the bus is dropping children in different areas (n=6).

*“When I brought [name] there to this private school I drove sixty-six miles per day I took [name] there and picked up from there since the school bus did not drive that far [in Florida]” (IN23)*

*“School transportation is annoying, if the child does not live far enough, parents need to take children there and pick them up by car every day. Therefore mums are full-time taxi-drivers. It may take half an hour in both ways lining with a car [in Florida].” (PA7)*

*“There was no transportation to this private kindergarten [in Florida].” (PA15)*



*“School bus system is organized for students, but everybody who can drive their children by themselves. Sitting in a bus makes the school day so much longer [in Florida].” (PA2)*

*“School transportation has been organized, but busses drive a long route before reaching the school so 10 minutes drive can turn into 1.5 hours [in Florida]” (PA11)*

Six answerers (n=6) tell that they are satisfied with the school transportation offered in Florida. Walking or bicycling to school was not seen as an option because of the safety issues (n=4). One of the answerers (n=1) even told that students are not allowed to leave the school premises without permission because of the safety issues.

*“But these busses work extremely well my children have always used busses [in Florida]” (IN22)*

*“Children cannot under in any circumstances walk to school. Police would probably arrest parents if an elementary school student would be seen alone on the streets [in Florida].” (PA7)*

*“In Florida, students, even high schoolers, can’t leave the school grounds without permission. There are fences and security guards.” (CH25)*

**TABLE 9.** School transportation in Florida

School Transportation in Florida			
School transportation free for all n=9	Drive the children themselves n=11 Because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- school is too far n=1</li> <li>- school is too near n=1</li> <li>- school is near work n=1</li> <li>- bus ride would take too long n=6</li> </ul>	Because of safety issues it is not an option to walk or ride a bike alone n=4	Satisfied with the school transportation in Florida n=6

Nine answerers (n=9) explain that in Finland students walk, ride a bike or use public transportation to get to the school. Three answerers (n=3) mention that if the school ride is too long, transportation by a taxi or a bus is organized in Finland too. Two of them (n=2) are satisfied with the school-organized transportation in Finland, but one is not (n=1).

*“School transportation in Finland is first class level and ha! In Finland you can walk to school or put your child in a bus or tram” (PA7)*

*“School transportation does not work in Finland, it is under heavy financial cuts.” (PA2)*

**TABLE 10.** School transportation in Finland

<b>School Transportation in Finland</b>	
Children walk, ride a bike or use a public transportation alone  n=9	If the school ride is too long government organizes the transportation  n=3  - satisfied with the service n=2 - not satisfied with the service n=1

### ***School Organized Free Time Activities***

Fourteen answerers (n=14) tell that there are a lot of free time activities organized by school in Florida. All answers are presented in the Table 11. Nine answerers (n=9) in turn told that in Finland there are less free time activities compared to Florida or none organized by school. Five answerers (n=5) praise the selection of free time activities and two answerers (n=2) told that Finland should take an example from Florida.

*“organized by school and of course there are other organizations which organize them too but schools have a lot of clubs after school and then all the sports are moved to after school [in Florida]” (IN23)*

*“it depends on schools for example in our school it is quite small in here there are only nine hundred students there at the moment – like a limited selection but of course bigger schools have more [in Florida]” (IN20)*

*“There is only a little school-organized activities. In this thing I think America could be an example, and school’s physical education could be in the afternoon , then everybody would have enough exercising during the day. [in Finland]” (PA15)*

*“In my opinion there were no possibilities for hobbies in schools [in Finland].” (PA3)*

*“A Finn typically goes in different kinds of sports clubs and organizations for hobbies, which are not connected to the school, but are still free or require only a small fee if you compare to the prizes in here [in Florida].” (PA7)*

Five answerers (n=5) add that even though the activities in Florida are plentiful they are chargeable for parents and sometimes need voluntary work by parents to get organized. One answerer (n=1) explains that sports are usually under competitive teams and skills are usually tested before getting in the team. One answerer (n=1) also adds that the selection of activities varies between schools. Bigger schools tend to have a wider range of selection.

*“then if you are selected into a team you need to get an insurance and medical certificate and then you also pay for it – you are in a band of some good school you may have to pay one thousand and five hundred but if you are in a band of a bad school you pay no more than three hundred [in Florida]” (IN19)*

*“in sports then because they are mostly competing teams so then of course if you can’t get through selection you need to consider a chess club or something like that [in Florida]” (IN23)*

*“School organized free time activities have a high quality, if you are ready to pay for them [in Florida].” (PA7)*

**TABLE 11.** School organized free time activities

School Organized Free Time Activities		
A lot of activities in Florida n= 14 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- chargeable n=5</li> <li>- entrance tests n=1</li> <li>- selection varies between schools n=1</li> </ul>	Not much or no activities in Finland n=9	Praise the activities in Florida n=5 → Finland should see Florida as an example n=2

## 6.1.2 PEDAGOGICAL DECISIONS

### *Teaching Methods*

The answers concerning teaching methods are listed in the Table 12. The biggest difference between teaching methods in Florida and in Finland seems to be project works. Nine answerers (n=9) explain that projects that should be finished at home and with parents are more common in Florida. Two answerers (n=2) add that projects and group works are quite common in Finland too, but they are made during the school day.

*“horrible amount of projects and they all have to be made at home like they are done in Finland too but they are done together in a group in school so participation of parents becomes visible there so then the parents who are interested in their children’s school they help their children to do the projects because they are often so difficult for example a science fair project which is started in fourth grade it is just as long as Finnish Master’s Thesis” (IN19)*

Two answerers (n=2) think that in Florida schoolwork is more practical than in Finland. An answerer (n=1) points out that in Finland students are expected more independency with schoolwork. Two answerers (n=2) tell that teachers do not use much books in Florida or they are old. One answerer (n=1) states that in Finland schoolbooks are good.

*“Comparing to my own school memories – there is more practical teaching here [in Florida]” (PA8)*

*“There is more “hands on” -teaching in Florida compared to Finland” (PA2)*

*“there was more focus on independent work in Finland” (PA4)*

*“Most annoying thing is the lack of books and recesses!!! Children bring a pack of papers home every day, in which the homework is done and then when teacher has checked them they are thrown away to trash/recycling. Students do not get own books, in which you could see what is already done and what will be coming [in Florida].” (PA7)*

One answerer (n=1) thinks that in Florida students are not really taught how to study. One answerer (n=1) explains that same issues are studied year after year and every year learning goes deeper on the issue in hand, but the borders of a certain school subject are that clear. The issue itself has a main role, not the subjects. Two answerers (n=2) think that overall teaching system is better in Finland than in Florida.

*“here [in Florida] the children are not taught to study – that part is missing like in my opinion the system is totally lost” (IN19)*

*“every year they go deeper and deeper with the subject which they have been teaching for example space [in Florida]” (IN19)*

*“The Finnish teaching methods, material and pace seemed to be faster and better than in Florida. I was way ahead when I enrolled in school in Florida, and remained bored until high school.” (CH24)*

**TABLE 12.** Teaching methods

Teaching Methods in Florida	
<p>More projects as a teaching method</p> <p>n=9</p>	<p>Overall better system in Finland n=2</p> <p>More practical teaching methods n=2</p> <p>Books are old or there are no books in Florida n=2</p> <p>Good books in Finland n=1</p> <p>Studying skills not taught n=1</p> <p>Deeper and deeper with the subject every year n=1</p> <p>More independency in Finland n=1</p>

### ***Homework***

There was somewhat variation in opinions on homework. There were some variation between the views on homework in Florida (Table 13) and in Finland (Table 14). Twelve answerers (n=12) think that there is a lot of or too much homework in Florida. Three of these answerers (n=3) add that students get homework even for holidays. Six answerers (n=6) tell that there is only a little or less homework in Finland compared to Florida. Two answerers (n=2) in the other hand state that there is not a lot of homework in Florida and one answerer (n=1) even thinks that in Finland there is more homework than in Florida.

*“Teachers always say in the beginning of the year that forty-five minutes per day and twenty minutes reading and I don’t know where they get these numbers because*

*like us our son is straight A student so not the most stupidest one and still he uses much over one hour each day for the homework so if you do everything conscientiously it takes in my opinion way too long time [in Florida]” (IN20)*

*“Homework is given to all holidays including summer holidays [in Florida]!” (PA1)*

*“There is less homework in Finnish schools than in American” (PA2)*

*“There is not much homework [in Florida] but parents’ help is needed at least during elementary school to keep up the same or better level than others” (PA10)*

*“Children get exhausted at home with multiple hours of homework, which is so difficult that grown-ups need to help them [in Florida].” (PA3)*

Five answerers (n=5) say that students would not manage the homework without help from parents. Two answerers (n=2) in turn tell that in Finland children do not need help for homework from parents. Two answerers (n=2) explain that their children do their homework in after school or when they have free time in school in Florida.

*“There is a lot of homework in here [in Florida] and they are parent’s responsibility especially in the first grades. “Family projects” are often given.” (PA5)*

*“Parents do not get involved with homework and they are not expected to take a responsibility of them [In Finland].” (PA5)*

*“our children have usually never had them because they have always done them in school like in the end of some lesson there has been time just like I said so they do their homework there at the school [in Florida]” (IN19)*

What seems remarkable here is that five answerers (n=5) tell that the amount of homework depends on the teachers and schools. Thus there is a lot of variation between schools in Florida.

*“Homework varies between teachers some give a lot and some give just a little [in Florida]” (IN22)*

*“Here they give like in not every subject is necessarily given but then I’d say like for Math you might suddenly get five or six pages [in Florida]” (IN19)*

**TABLE 13.** Homework in Florida

<b>Homework in Florida</b>			
A lot of or too much homework in Florida n=12 → even for holidays n=3	Not much homework in Florida n=2	Children would not manage homework without a help n=5	Children do their homework in school or after school club n=2
<b>→ Variation Between Schools n=5</b>			

**TABLE 14.** Homework in Finland

<b>Homework in Finland</b>		
Only little or less homework than in Florida n=6	More homework than in Florida n=1	Children do not need help from the parents n=2

***Discipline***

Discipline in school divides somewhat the opinions of the answerers. However basically it is seen that the discipline is strong in Florida (Table 15) and weaker in Finland (Table 16). Four answerers (n=4) think that discipline is good in Florida. Eight answerers (n=8) mention there are really strict discipline and rules in schools in Florida. Two answerers (n=2) think that the discipline is lacking in Florida. Two answerers (n=2) also think that the discipline depends on teacher.

*“They are scared of fights and problems (and with a good reason) so much that the discipline must be strict in American schools” (PA3)*

*“Again discipline depends on teacher” (PA16)*

*“Teacher is not appreciated enough- too little disciplinary rights [in Florida]” (PA4)*

Two answerers (n=2) add that it is common to speak formally to older people including teachers in Florida and these manners are taught early in life. One answerer (n=1) explains this with social pressure. However the volume of speaking and the noise in school is seen too high according to three answerers (n=3).

*“Yes you speak very formally plus then I believe that in my opinion teenagers here which I see are behaving much better than for example in Finland” (IN19)*

*“When they teach you to speak formally to a teacher from the beginning it comes from there – like well between family members – they speak Aunt Alice or Uncle Mike or like there is this title first [in Florida]” (IN19)*

*“Is it because everyone else does that too so you want to kind of belong to this group so is it kind of like social pressure which does that that it is so horrible if you kind of do not obey the rules of the school I think that it is that embarrassment that you are send into the office from not obeying the rules and your parents need to pick you up [in Florida]” (IN19)*

*“Here then when you go to a classroom horrible noise all the time and in my opinion when I listened to it at the first time when I visited the class oh my god continuous headache would come here because of the horrible noise” (IN23)*

**TABLE 15.** Discipline in Florida

Discipline in Florida					
Strict rules n=8	Good discipline n=4	Good manners are taught n=2	Noise in the school too loud n=3	Depends on teacher n=2	Discipline is lacking n=2

Six answerers (n=6) think that respect for teacher and therefore discipline is bad in Finland. One answerer (n=1) mentions that the overall appreciation in Finland towards teacher profession is high. Four answerers (n=4) recalls that discipline was good when they studied in Finland. However three of these answerers (n=3) add that at least it was good when they use to go to school in Finland.

*“Discipline problems (read disturbing behavior/ lack of respect for teachers and assistants) has come unglued. Is it because the schooling is taken for granted and children/PARENTS do not matter if they get a note from school. Teacher is not qualified, if our little sweetheart gets disciplined!! And this is heaven, the true today! In American schools children get expelled right away, if third warning does not work. Expelled from three days to entirely. It is a REAL HUMILIATION for parents, if this happens. Even only three days! In Finland school satisfaction is apparently a topic already in elementary school. Where are the enthusiastic pupils from the past? Why don’t children want to go to school nowadays? It’s because our parents’ attitudes! We do not understand that our stances are forwarded to the children. And children listen our every comment, which we speak out loud, and criticize directly, outrageously and rudely, teachers. Children’s use of language in schools/recesses is terrible cursing in here too! My children do not curse, and they are wonder every*



*day that why others (not of course everyone) do that. Most of the lessons go to waste because of the problems with discipline.” (PA15)*

*“During that time the discipline in school was pretty good” (PA15)*

*“Discipline has changed from the times I was in the school myself” (PA11)*

*“Teachers profession is valued more in Finland.” (PA5)*

*“I would say that discipline is lacking, but in Finland there was no need for discipline. It was innate, and no one stepped out of line.” (CH1)*

**TABLE 16.** Discipline in Finland

Discipline in Finland		
Discipline is bad and not working n=6	Overall appreciation towards teachers high n=1	Discipline was good during the time the answerer studied n=4 → n=3 not sure if the situation is still the same

### ***Punishment and Reward***

Punishing and rewarding are one of the issues that stand out from the answers (Table 17). Five answerers (n=5) tell that it is common in Florida to punish students for bad behavior by taking something away from students. All of these answerers mention that often it is especially recess, which is taken away from whole class even if only one student is misbehaving. Three answerers (n=3) add their worry that it is not good for the children to take their breaks away.

*“punishment is always that something is taken away [in Florida]” (PA11)*

Two answerers (n=2) explain that rules in schools are strict that it is quite common to suspend or expel students from schools for few days to few weeks. Three answerers (n=3) tell that it is common that children are given candies, stickers, pencils, trophies and other treats as a reward. However two answerers (n=2) mention that students are supported and given positive feedback more than in Finland.

*“In Florida children are punished for bad behavior by detention but also by suspending them from few days to few weeks” (PA5)*

*“Children are rewarded for good success [in Florida].” (PA5)*

*“In Florida students were encouraged more and it was aimed to give positive feedback always. Everyone succeeds in something. In Finnish schools the feedback is focused often on weaknesses and mistakes.” (PA6)*

What is mentioned about punishments or rewards in Finland is, that one interviewee (n=1) states that in Finland it is more in common to get a personal reprimand from teacher or principal as a punishment than in Florida and parents are also informed from these misbehaviors or trouble. Other answerer (n=1) states that bribing is not considered as a way for motivation in Finland. In the other hand one answerer (n=1) thinks that in Finland students do not get enough positive feedback.

*“in Finland in turn it is always principal’s reprimand or or first teacher’s reprimand and parents are always contacted” (IN19)*

*“In Finland there is no popcorn Friday, if school week has gone well, in other words, bribing is not considered as a way of motivating” (PA17)*

**TABLE 17.** Punishment and reward

<b>Punishment and Reward in Florida</b>			
Common to take something like recess away as a punishment n=5 → n=3 worried about recesses	Students may get suspended or expelled if not behaving well n=2	A lot of material rewards n=3 → n=1 considers it bribing the children	Students get a lot or more positive feedback than in Finland n=2 → n=1 not enough positive feedback in Finland

### 6.1.3 QUALITY AND ASSESSMENT

#### *Quality of Teaching*

Quality of teaching shows specifically how much there are differences between schools in Florida and also what factors are seen as the base for the quality (Table 18). Eleven answerers (n=11) think that the quality of teaching depends on the teacher; nine answerers (n=9) think that it depends on school and three (n=3) answerers think that it depends on the area where the school is located.

*“I notice every year quite fast the variability of quality in teaching depending on teacher [in Florida].” (PA7)*

*“Varies a lot between schools [in Florida]. Private schools aim to top level, in public sector charter-schools do well (financial issues).” (PA2)*

*“Schools vary by the quality of education they provide in Florida. Regional differences originate partly from the backgrounds of the children going to school.” (PA5)*

Two answerers (n=2) added that in Finland in contrary the quality is quite the same around the whole country. Two answerers (n=2) state that the quality of teaching is good in Florida, but not as good as in Finland. One answerer (n=1) thinks that the quality is good in Florida. Two answerers (n=2) explain that the quality requires parents’ awareness especially when choosing the school.

*“In Finland all the schools are quite the same quality here [in Florida] there is a huge variety in which school you get into” (IN23)*

*“Teachers’ educational background vary between schools. There are differences in teacher’s educational level [in Florida].” (PA16)*

*“In elementary school level the quality of education is good, but not excellent compared to Finland.” (PA7)*

*“Depends in the school. You can get good quality education in the Usa but you need to be aware of the choices by yourself, the nearest school may not be the best option [in Florida]” (PA11)*

**TABLE 18.** Quality of teaching

Quality of Teaching in Florida					
Depends on teacher n=11	Depends on school n=9	Depends on area n=3	Quality is good, but not as good in Finland n=2, Quality is good n=1	Quality is good if the school is chosen wisely n= 2	In Finland about the quality is same everywhere n=2

### ***Testing and Assessment***

The amount of testing in Florida and in Finland is compared and presented in the answers (Table 19). Also the differences in evaluation are brought up (Table 20). Nine answerers (n=9) explained the fact that in Florida every student needs to take part in statewide tests every year. By the level of success in these tests the schools get their funding from the state.

*“There is too much pressure on governmental tests which are used to evaluate the teachers [in Florida]” (PA9)*

Two answerers (n=2) add that statewide tests do not have any influence on the final assessment except if the student fails he/she might need to repeat the grade. Three answerers (n=3) mention that the final assessment is not made only according to regular exams during the school year, but by overall level of activeness. Two answerers (n=2) think that the assessment is not so strict in Florida than in Finland.

*“which is the frightening two weeks you know something like our matriculation examination in a [Finnish] upper secondary school all the subject dealt with this year – it is immoderately hard test – if you don’t succeed you fail and you have to repeat the class [in Florida]” (IN21)*

*“The final assessment is based on multiple things student who works hard with the homework may get along better than the usual top-performer in the tests [in Florida]” (PA13)*

*“The school culture is much more loose here [in Florida]” (IN23)*

*“there are a lot of good quality teachers here [in Florida] but the school system and society does not support teachers; teachers need to put the lazy students forward even though they do not deserve that good grade etc.” (PA3)*

Four answerers (n=4) think that there are a lot of tests in Florida and five answerers (n=5) state that there are too many tests in Florida. Testing seems to be raising strong feelings among answerers. Two answerers (n=2) explain that most of the tests in Florida are multiple answers and in Finland they think students write more in the tests.

*“That testing is sometimes so annoying that same time could be used to teaching to get better results” (IN22)*

*“yes they test them a lot yeah and they have those random pop quizzes” (IN21)*

*“The quality of teaching suffers a lot because of these stupid tests [in Florida]”  
(PA7)*

*“They write a lot more in Finland; in America tests are mostly multiple choice”  
(PA3)*

*“I don’t really recall how evaluations in Finland took place. I’m sure tests were involved, but they must not have been as emphasized as they are in Florida.”  
(CH23)*

**TABLE 19.** Testing

Testing		
State-wide tests every year (FCAT)  n=9	A lot of tests and exams over the year n=4  Too much tests and exams n=5	Tests are mostly multiple choice in Florida and written exams in Finland  n=2

**TABLE 20.** Evaluation

Evaluation		
State-wide tests do not have an influence on evaluation  n=2	Overall level of activeness counts, not just the test results  n=3	Evaluation is not so strict as in Finland  n=2

### **Competition**

The answerers give their opinions of the amount of competition in Finland and Florida (Table 21). Six answerers (n=6) think mention that there was a lot of competition in Florida. Two answerers (n=2) state that children are demanded to do more from the beginning in Florida compared to Finland. Four answerers (n=4) think that in Finland there is less or no competition compared to Florida.

*“Competing all the time and ranking [in Florida].” (PA1)*

*“Students are required so much more here [in Florida] ever since they are little”  
(IN20)*

*“here [in Florida] children are brainwashed already in kindergarten to try their best, if they want to succeed in life. Other children admire the well-performing classmates. Children are rewarded in many ways by the school for good success and parents compete and boast openly on the school success of their children. E.g. if the student gets excellent report, parents are given stickers to put in their cars "My child is an honor student at xxx elementary/ middle / high school" These students with excellent report get to go for a lunch with the principal etc.” (PA7)*

*“I didn’t have a sense of competition in Finland, but it was routinely encouraged in Florida.” (CH24)*

Two answerers (n=2) mention the competition between the schools in statewide tests for funding. Three answerers (n=3) mention that students are divided to different groups by their abilities. Two answerers (n=2) mention that there is a lot of competition in getting in the sports teams.

*“Financing and teachers bonuses are dependent on the results of these state-wide tests and children’s access to these better “middle schools” are attached to the results, so the pressure of principals, teachers and students is high for the succeeding.” (PA7)*

*“here is this advanced group and then the middle and then there is this well this this low reading [in Florida]” (IN20)*

*“Certain children are categorized as “gifted” and they get different exercises. Maybe in America they pay attention more these “good” students and they are overly praised. And maybe in Finland they pay more attention to these children with difficulties in certain things so that no one is left behind.” (PA9)*

*“There is a hard competition in getting into teams. Sports are idolized in a whole different way here [in Florida] than in Finland.” (PA15)*

*“Well I think that the competition between schools come from the sports – well of course if the other school is A and the other one B by FCAT then the school A gets more money than the school B [in Florida]” (IN19)*

**TABLE 21.** Competition

<b>Competition</b>				
A lot of competition in Florida n=6 → children are pushed to compete ever since little n=2	Less competition in Finland compared to Florida n=4	Competition between schools because of the state-wide tests n=2	Children divided into groups because by the abilities n=3	Competition among schools' sports teams n=2

## 6.2 SCHOOL SUCCESS

The answers are examined by dividing them to two different categories, which are the *cognitive and pedagogical factors* and *social factors* (Figure 2). Social factors are mentioned more and considered more relevant for school success in Florida. By the opinions of the answerers there are some similarities between these two cultures what factors are valuable for the school success. However the culture and the educational policies behind the school system can be seen in the answers. The factors behind school success are viewed first from the Floridian perspective (Table 22) and then Finnish perspective (Table 23).

### **Florida**

Eight answerers (n=8) believe that a child's own activity and drive for learning is one of the main factors for success. Three answerers (n=3) mention that school success depends on the school. School's small size (n=1) was mentioned by individual answerers as one of the positive factors for success in Florida. Interesting teaching methods (n=1) and good supportive system for gifted students (n=1) are also mentioned. Two answerers (n=2) also believe that students are encouraged to compete from very early in life and that has an influence on school success. Two answerers (n=2) think that students are given positive feedback, which has an influence on school success.

*“I would say that consistency that you do them every day [homework in Florida]” (IN21)*

*“The general and open appreciation for school success among both children and parents supports the school success. American society supports school success too, so the higher the level of education the better your position in work life is [in Florida]” (PA7)*

Thirteen answerers (n=13) state that the activity and support of parents is an important factor for children's school success in Florida. Nine answerers (n=9) explain that being extrovert and socially active are important characters for the success in Florida. Four answerers (n=4) think that school success depends on teacher or how well teacher and student get along.

*“In my experience school success depends on the activity of parents on children's schooling and the quality of the school the child goes to [in Florida]” (PA6)*

*“Parents are tried to get participating more in school success by different kinds of events and volunteering [in Florida]” (PA8)*

*“if student is very social and extrovert he has a better chance to get along in school.... reading as a hobby ever since little is absolutely a benefit, and bilingualism – my children learn foreign languages easier than their classmates [in Florida]” (PA4)*

*“when you already in the first grade make a project and present it to the class so they force you to socializing [in Florida] and then that Americans are used to bratting and speaking and representing and Finns in turn are like it is hard to get good morning wish in a bus” (PA22)*

Three answerers (n=3) explain that teacher changes every year. One answerer (n=1) also adds that at the same time it forces children to be more social but in Finland where students are together and with the same teacher for longer students bond together more and relationships become stronger. Two answerers (n=2) think that the school and home communicate more in Florida.

*“How well teacher (which changers every year) and student ‘go together’, if you are a ‘social butterfly’ or otherwise ‘cool’ [in Florida]” (PA1)*

*“In Florida teachers sent us more even unofficial notes and messages” (PA6)*



One answerer (n=1) thinks that there is a lot of bullying in schools in Florida. However two answerers (n=2) state that the bullying is cut immediately when noticed for example by expelling the bully or moving the bully to another class. Noisiness and disturbance during classes were factors common in Florida (n=3), which have a clear negative effect on success by one answerer's opinion (n=1).

*“Bullying is common [in Florida]” (PA16)*

*“The bullying is intervened easily; students can be suspended or transferred to another class if problems begin piling [in Florida]” (PA2)*

*“We have maybe have it like I have been living here twenty years now and I see it like our life style is much more serious – here the school and everything is much more funny” (IN21)*

**TABLE 22.** School success in Florida

<b>School Success in Florida</b>	
<i><b>Cognitive and Pedagogical Perspectives</b></i>	<i><b>Social Perspectives</b></i>
Child's own drive and motivation on learning n=8	Parents' support n=13 → better communication between schools and homes than in Finland n=2
Quality of school n=3 → small school is better n=1	Child's social activity n=9
Society pushing towards competing n=2 Interesting teaching methods n=1 Good support for gifted students n=1 Positive feedback n=1	Teacher and teacher-student relationship n=4 → teacher changes every year n=3
	Bullying is common n=1 → Bullying is intervened easily and immediately n=2
	Too much noise in the schools n=3

## **Finland**

Seven answerers (n=7) think that a child's own activity and drive for learning is one of the main factors for success in Finland. Children are taught to be more independent early in life.

*"In Finland the school success is about the child him/herself and his/her drive for learning." (PA5)*

Three answerers (n=3) think that the grades are the essential sign of success and nothing else is needed for success later on. Two answerers (n=2) add that social activity in the classroom may have an influence on grades.

*"In our time grades were the ones compared, rather than the learning results in general perspective [in Finland]." (PA1)*

*"good grades were the absolute sign for school success – nothing else didn't matter.... [in Finland]" (PA4)*

*"Mirroring to my own school time, what I remember is, that good grades combined to socially active personality, were good and positive factors for the school success [in Finland]." (PA1)*

By one answerer (n=1) students in Finland have the same opportunity for success, because the quality of schools is quite the same all over the country. Although the access to optional studies varies around the country and that may bring some inequality.

*"In Finland everybody has the same chance to succeed in school, but in the other hand there is not much options with schools and specializing. In a small town there is only one school and special subjects are determined by which subject teachers there happens to be." (PA2)*

Two answerers (n=2) also believe that the environment and atmosphere itself was motivating in Finland. Still three answerers (n=3) think that bullying, relationships and social issues are problems in schools in Finland.

*"The environment. The school itself was a nice, old building. The teachers were respectable and knowledgeable. The food was great, so morale was high overall. There was never that dreary feeling of being imprisoned while your life ticks away, which is commonplace in U.S. schools (largely due to wasted time, e.g. "Ok kids, I'm*

*going to pop in this non-related movie so I can grade papers in class instead of at home!")” (CH24)*

*“The general atmosphere is more positive was more positive and better base for learning .. doing well in exams was covering the parents’ neglect [in Finland]” (PA13)*

*“With social relationships Finland could improve, so if school success would be more appreciated and rewarded and if there would be a peace for working, how well would Finnish children do then” (PA7)*

Two answerers (n=2) think that teacher has a strong professionalism in Finland and two answerers think that teacher has the main influence on children’s school success in Finland. Parents do not participate in schooling as much as in Florida. One answerer (n=1) thinks that in both Florida and Finland the co-operation between school and home is one of the most important factors for school success just like in Florida or apparently anywhere.

*“The influence of the teacher is very significant [in Finland].” (PA11)*

*“There is less co-operation and communication between school and home in Finland compared to Florida. Here [in Florida] you get a feedback of your child’s day every day from his/her calendar and I send e-mails with the teacher every week, so the early intervention to possible problems is easy. So I would say that the school success more dependent on parents than in Finland. In Finland children are pushed in the school and as a teacher’s responsibility, there is less parents’ participation. In Florida parents have to participate to school activities by doing certain amount of volunteering for the school (e.g. assisting in the class room, in the cafeteria, field trips etc.) (PA2)”*

**TABLE 23.** School success in Finland

<b>School Success in Finland</b>	
<i>Cognitive and Pedagogical Perspectives</i>	<i>Social Perspectives</i>
Child's own drive and motivation on learning n=7	Teacher has more an important role for success than parents' support n=2  → Good communication between school and home would have a positive influence n=1
Good grades are a sign of success n=3  → social activity may enhance the grades n=2	Bullying and social problems are common n=3
The quality around the Finland is quite the same n=1	Overall atmosphere is more positive than in Florida n=2

### 6.3 MULTICULTURALISM

There are two claims in the end of the survey and the answerers were asked to give their opinion on them. The first claim is:

The fact, that I am originally from another culture or country does not have any influence on my / my children's school success.

Eight answerers (n=8) mention that Florida is seen so multicultural state that people are used to working together with people from different backgrounds. Twelve answerers (n=12) state that the background has an influence and fairly positive one on school success in Florida. Ten answerers (n=10) mention that it is a richness to have a different background and it really gives a wider perspective on world.

*“Florida is a melting pot of different people and here almost everybody is originally from somewhere else. Bilingualism is completely a part of every day life and my children are participating ESOL –program that supports those children's English learning skills who speak some other language at home. The program is state provided support program, which is free for the students. Per se everybody has come*

*to America from somewhere else. Here the child does not stand out because of his/her name, color or home language so clearly than in five-million-citizens Finland. (PA2)”*

*“In my opinion, very much... I have taught my children the value of multiculturalism and how it shapes the person and society in positive way. Widens the world perspective.” (PA10)*

Seven answerers (n=7) add that Finnish background is only a benefit for the success. Six answerers (n=6) think that bilingualism helps children to learn better other languages. Three answerers (n=3) mention that the home language has not been problem. Learning English was a little bit slower in the beginning, but after that they have learned both languages well.

*“My child says that because he/she is multicultural he/she can understand better other children from different cultures, which makes him/her better with co-operation. My 4th-grader son also explains in English that understanding Finnish and Spanish helps him in Spanish lesson” (PA9)*

*“Student coming from Finland and from Finnish family does better in average than others. Cultural background values education and teachers more and it is planted on the own children too.” (PA1)*

*“generally the people coming from Europe the parents want to push their children more and they take care that the child does homework and participate in child’s schooling and takes care that child holds on there like when you have parents who couldn’t care less what your child does in the evenings” (IN23)*

*“that certain kind of language learning skill is improving I think that they will succeed better who are from many two different cultures” (PA21)*

*“Their vocabulary in English was a bit weaker than the monolinguals had at the age of 3-5, but now it is clearly better than average students have.” (PA7)*

Two answerers (n=2) although feel that it has sometimes been difficult to help their children with homework because home language is different than school language and the teaching methods are different than which they are used to.

*“I don’t know if it’s a advantage or disadvantage sometimes it feels with homework that it is a disadvantage because for example with homework when we try to help it is difficult because we need to translate it first from English to Finnish for ourselves and there are a lot of things which already after eighteen years my own English is quite good but there are words and terms which you haven’t seen or familiar things which you need to consider and look for internet and of course the teaching methods are different than eighteen years ago” (IN20)*

There is also another claim in the category of multiculturalism. The purpose of this claim was to measure the how well the answerers themselves believe they suit as an answerer for the research.

As a person having lived in two countries or cultures I am able to compare the differences in Finnish and Florida basic education in a different perspective than a person who has lived in only one culture or country.

Thirteen answerers (n=13) agree with the second claim and rest of the answerers leave this part unanswered. Four of the answerers (n=4) added that if there has been a while since the answerer has been in Finland, the things might have changed in some parts.

*“Of course the practical experiences give a better approach to how things really are than if the information is for example read or heard. In the other hand my experience in Finnish school life is limited on my own time in school and to sharing the experiences of my friends’ children, so my view on the Finnish basic education today may partly be outdated” (PA2)*

*“Yes, that is how I believe. Comparing does not mean thinking better-worse approach rather it means seeing the disparities.” (PA6)*

*“Naturally it is like this, since I have personally experienced the both cultures. I have also been in my past as a exchange student in high school and I have encountered these differences already back then.” (PA7)*

*“Isn’t it just crystal clear, that the perspective widens and deepens due to different experiences.” (PA19)*

## 7 DISCUSSION

The findings of the research will be discussed and inspected more closely in this chapter. They are presented by the three main categories, which create the base for the research (Figure 2) in order to find the answers for the research questions. These categories are practical differences (Figure 3), school success (Figure 4) and multiculturalism (Figure 5).

### 7.1 PRACTICAL DIFFERENCES

Some topics of this research were merely just listed than given opinions on. For example answerers explain that there are more different *school subjects* in Florida. This finding is supported by the legislations presented earlier in this research by the Finnish Basic Education Act and The 2010 Florida Statutes. Some answerers also add that even though there are less different subjects in Florida some subjects like social studies include the same subject areas as various different school subjects in Finland. Therefore it would require getting deeper with everyday curricula of subjects to know the differences in the school subjects better. But there are some differences, which become clear through the data. Just like the 2010 Florida Statutes define the answerers explain that religion is not a public school subject, but it may be a part of private school education. However it is still one of the subjects taught in Finnish elementary schools. The same applies with foreign languages in the elementary school in Florida. Public schools do not need to offer arts and physical education for students in Florida, but schools are encouraged by New Generation Sunshine State Standards to add them as a part of the curriculum. Many answerers in this research think that there is less focus on arts, physical education and foreign languages in Florida compared to Finland. However some schools may be specializing in certain subjects that may include arts and physical education too.

In Florida *school food* is chargeable and the quality of food is seen mostly dissatisfying. This is clearly seen as a huge disadvantage for Floridian school system and the importance of healthy lunch is commonly understood among the answerers. That leads parents to pack the lunches to go with the children. However answerers believe that the quality of the school food has been getting more attention lately in Florida in order to increase the quality. The Finnish school food instead is praised by a lot by the answerers. Finnish school food has a long history. School food was offered first time in 1890's and now it is a natural part of the school day. As few answerers pointed out, the school lunch is seen as a part of education in Finland. Eating manners, health and culture

are taught and forwarded to the children through the school lunch. Increasing amount of multiculturalism and travelling will be the challenges for the future when creating the menus. The school lunch and its educational meaning is also included in the Finnish national curriculum. (Jeronen & Helander 2012, 20–24.)

It seems that in Finland the value of healthy school lunch for health and eventually even for school success is understood better. However few answerers mention that during their own school time they did not appreciate the Finnish school lunch because the taste was not satisfying even though they knew it was healthy. They also mention that there are healthy options in school restaurants in Florida as well, children just tend to choose an unhealthy option if they are given a possibility to choose. Many answerers add that their children with Finnish background do not like the quality of food in Florida. This leads to suggest that the unhealthy option seems often more tempting and children do not automatically know what is good for their health unless it is taught by the school and family. Free Finnish school lunch seems a functional strategy for educating citizens towards healthier choices and educating them about importance of healthy food for future success.

The *school days* tend to be longer in Florida. Free *school transportation* is offered in most cases, but still many parents drive the children to school by themselves. They explain that the long school ride would lengthen the school day even more. There are also fewer *recesses* in Florida than in Finland. Answerers are worried that students will not get enough breaks during the day in Florida. Researches tell that physical activity has a positive influence on learning results especially on mathematics. This has led educators to consider the importance of physical education and recesses more in Finland. Especially recesses including physical activity are seen valuable for school success. (Syväoja, Kantomaa, Laine, Jaakkola, Pyhältö & Tammelin 2012, 5.) Thus the concern of the answerers is understandable and should have even more attention in the Floridian school system.

Many answerers pointed out that in Finland schools do not offer that much *free time activities*. In Finland most of the free time activities are organized by organizations outside the school. However there are morning and afternoon activities guaranteed free for first and second grade students by the Basic Education Act (48a§ and 48b§). All other elementary school pupils are offered an option to join different kinds of free club activities in the afternoons in order to make sure that all the students have an equal possibility for free time activities during the years of basic education. (Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland.)

The amount and variety of activities in Finnish schools cannot even be compared against the options for free time activities organized by schools in Florida. Every answerer answering this section seems content with the amount and variation of options in Florida. The free time activities



were seen as a huge advantage of Floridian school system. One answerer even suggested that all the physical education in Finland should be transferred to afternoons following the example of Florida. Although this may first seem quite a decent idea, it also makes me wonder about the students who have chosen other than physical activities for free time in Florida. Competitive sports teams have entrance exams in schools and the most active students are the ones getting into sports activities. In this fictional situation the students who actually would need more physical education, students who will not do any exercising without advised to do so, would go through basic education without any physical education. It would seem sensible that the healthier the citizens are the more capital they will eventually bring for the nation and therefore the physical education should be a compulsory part of the curriculum at least in some form.

What seems to be distinctive in Florida is that teachers use a lot of project work as a *teaching method*. Many of these projects need to be made at home and require parents' participation. Few answerers add that projects may be used as a teaching method in Finland too, but they are finished during school day and do not require parents' help. Many answerers state that there is more *homework* for students in Florida than in Finland. Also the children need more help and support from parents with their homework in Florida. Few answerers explain that children are expected more independency at early phase in Finland. Therefore schools require a lot more participation from parents in Florida than in Finland.

The answerers state that the rules in schools are strict in Florida. Rules are kept strict to ensure the safety in schools and to avoid social problems like bullying. According to two answerers bullying is taken seriously and cut off in early phase. Therefore the discipline is seen as functioning well in Florida. Quite a decent amount of answerers think that the *discipline* used to be good in Finland in their childhood, but the situation seems to have changed now. There seems to be a lack of discipline in Finnish schools and the answerers worry about social problems. The answerers seem to be noticing the same problems as the educators and researchers. The social issues certainly are a problem waiting for serious attention from teachers, principals, educators, researcher and parents. Better communication between all the participants would be necessary for the development. (Kiilakoski 2012; Finnish National Board of Education 2007.)

Another difference between Finland and Florida seems to be concerning rewarding and punishment. Taking away the recesses are often used as a way to punish children for bad behavior. Children are also generously rewarded for success with both material and verbal rewards. This seems to be quite uncommon in Finland. Instead according to both answerers and researchers Finnish students do not even get much verbal rewards or positive feedback. Positive feedback would have a positive influence on children's motivation and eventually their success. I do not

believe that the Floridian way to reward students with unhealthy snacks would do any good for the children, their success or especially health, but certainly the Finnish teachers should be encouraged to give more positive, verbal feedback for students. (The Finnish Institute for Educational Research 2014.)

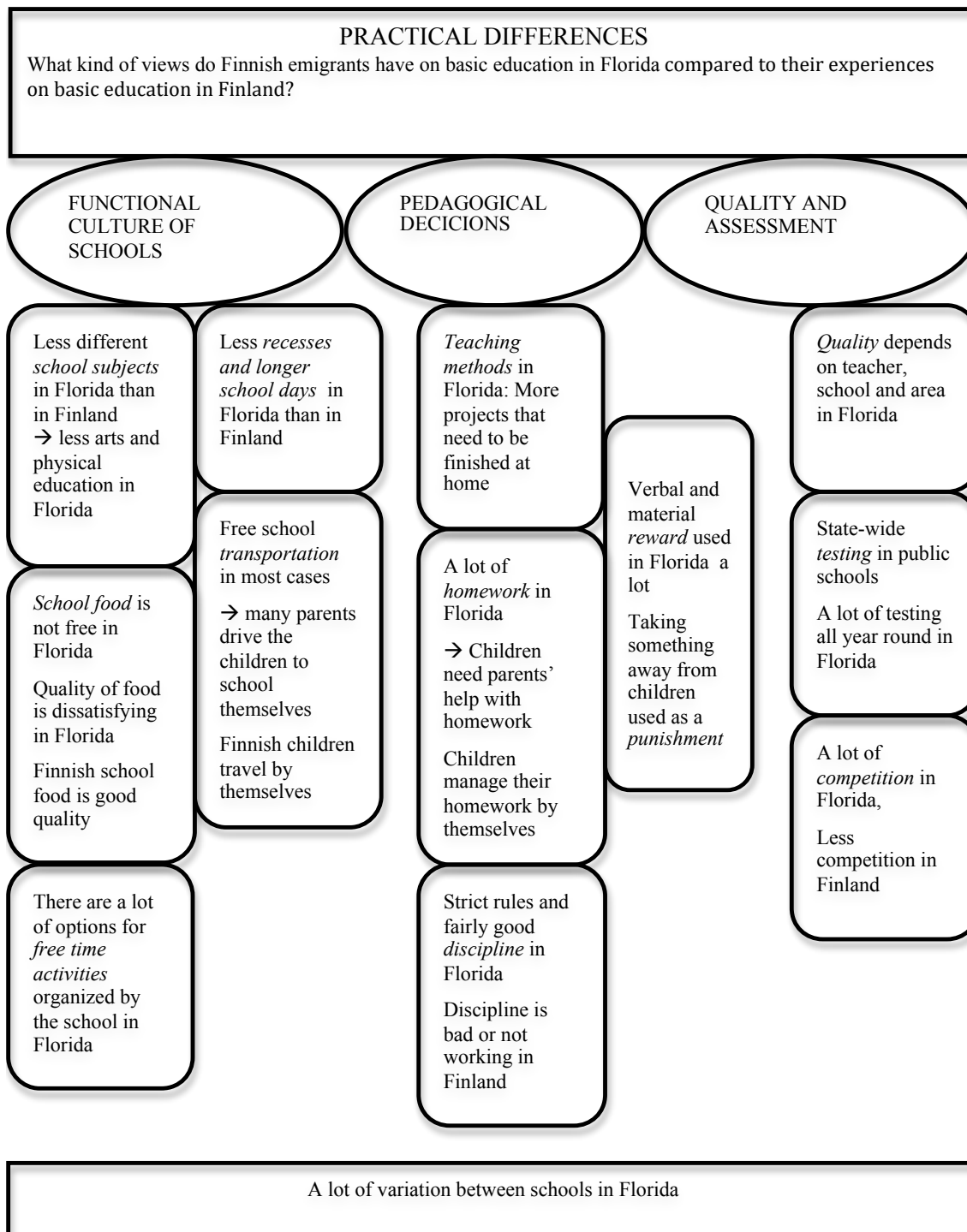
The public schools compete against each other by the success of students' statewide tests and schools are ranked by these results. The Floridian public school system is based on *testing* which the answerers criticize. They would rather direct the attention to improving the quality of teaching instead of testing. Doctor Carlos Diaz (10 January 2014) addresses his concern as well, because the testing pushes teachers to emphasize on subjects and subject areas which are included in the tests at the cost of many important subjects and issues that are excluded from the tests for example social studies (e.g. geography, history, economics, sociology).

The American culture of competition can be seen behind the testing. As the answerers state that in Florida, in the USA, the whole society pushes students for competing. Even though the public education is free and compulsory the idea of market based economy can be also seen behind the public sector. As doctor Diaz (10 January 2014) explains that when about two decades ago students were not performing well the conservative movement became a part of American education. The conservative movement stated that schools should be hold more accountable and run more like businesses. The money, the profit is the answer for school success. Thus public schools get their financial resources from the state according to the success in the state-wide testing. Also the teachers get personal bonuses by the success. These results seem to be coherent with the neoliberalistic educational policy behind the American culture presented earlier on in this thesis. (van Apeldoorn & de Graaff 2012.)

The basic education is free and compulsory in both Finland and Florida (Basic Education Act and The 2010 Florida Statutes). However the testing and *competition* seem to be distinctive only for Florida. In Finland students, teachers and schools are not tested or inspected the way they are tested in Florida and there is no clear competition in Finland and schools are non-profit organizations. (Diaz 10 January 2014 & Mäkinen 27 May 2014). This is the situation at least for now, but the competitiveness and control of performance seem to be becoming more and more valued perspectives in Finnish educational policies too. (Varjo 2007.) Nevertheless the Finnish school system is still far from a totally capitalistic market economy affected school system (Mäkinen 27 May 2014).

What seems worth to notice is that there is *high variation* of emphasis on subjects and the quality between schools in Florida? The answerers explain that the quality of the school depends on the area where it is located, because the income of the family typically defines the area where the

family settles. Doctor Diaz (10 January 2014) explains that young teachers tend to be the ones teaching in urban and multicultural schools. Working in these urban multicultural schools with diverse group of students is stressful and challenging. The jobs in suburban schools with better performing students are highly sought for and appreciated. After gaining few years of experience teachers often move to these schools and yet again the students at-risk get a new young teacher, but only for a while. Doctor Diaz suggests that already during their studies student teachers should get experience on multicultural schools through their student training, to get more prepared for their future career. It seems indeed that by this current pattern the students that are most in need for strong educational guidance get the less experienced teachers. In Finland the situation is not quite the same as Mäkinen (27 May 2014) explains. The quality of the schools is quite even and also the people from diverse backgrounds have spread around the country. All the teachers are required a Master's degree. However even Mäkinen admits that it would require some special kind of motivation from teachers to work in Helsinki, capital of Finland, because of its challenging and diverse groups of students.



**FIGURE 3.** The main findings of the practical differences

## 7.2 SCHOOL SUCCESS

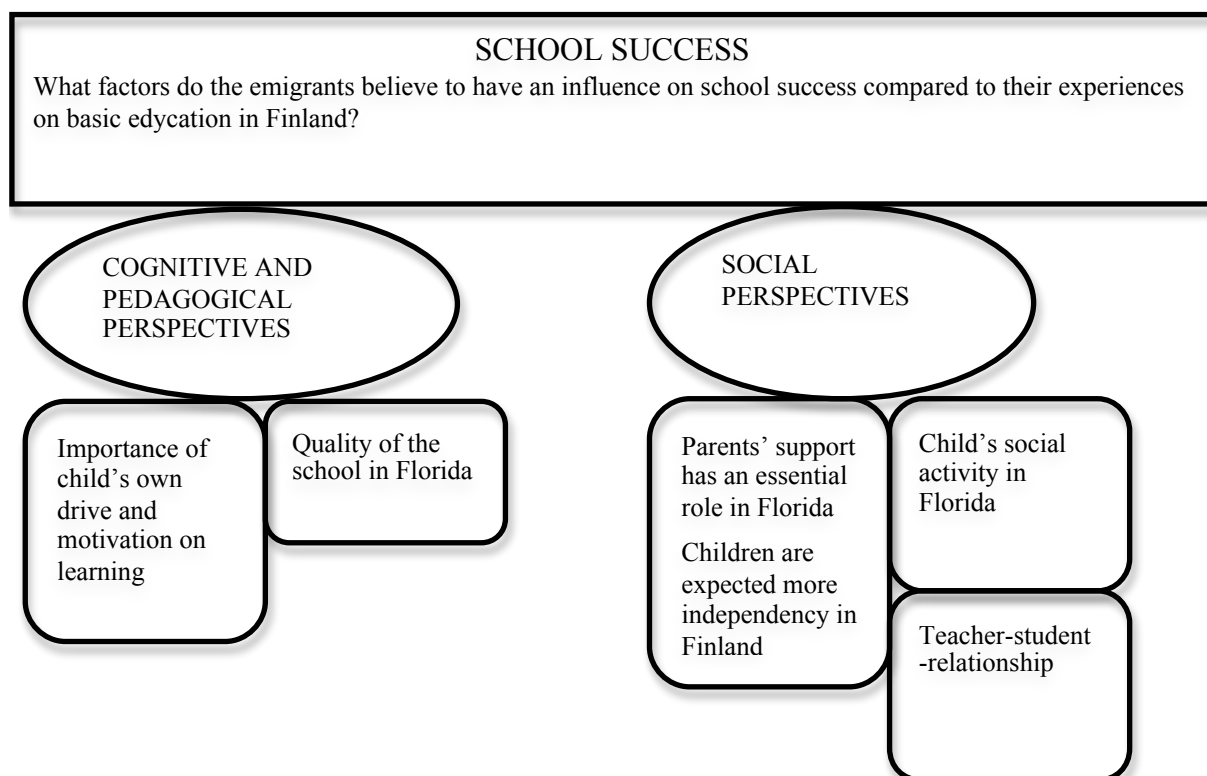
Answerers point out that it seems to be common in both cultures that *student's own drive, motivation and interest* for studying have a great influence on school success. Psychological and educational researches before seem to be supporting these results (Pervin 1996). As presented earlier in this chapter there is a lot of variation between schools in Florida and the answerers believe that the quality of school has a role for success.

What comes to social perspectives it seems to be distinctive for Floridian schools and for the culture behind them that *social activity* has an important role for success. Socializing and networking are supported by the teaching methods and social activities organized by schools. The activity is seen essential for not only the current school success, but for the future success too, since the social networking and voluntary work are benefits when applying for further studies. In Finland it seems that the grades and learning results are the most important factors for the further studies. The voluntary work does not really exist in Finnish culture the way it does in the USA. As noticed earlier in this chapter the social issues seem to be in need for development in Finland. Encouraging for socializing and networking might be an issue to consider in order to increase the school satisfaction in Finland.

Another important social factor seen as essential for the success in both cultures is the quality of teaching; a *good teacher* leads towards success. Answerers believe that functional teacher-student relationship is linked to school success as well. These thoughts seem coherent with the researches presented earlier in this thesis. However researches show that the student-teacher relationships have problems in Finland and therefore these issues should be taken into serious inspection in the future. (Hullena & Hullena 2010.)

*Parents' activity* is supported and required in Florida. Teachers and parents communicate more in Florida than in Finland. The answerers see this as an important benefit for Floridian system. In Florida teachers give more projects and homework, which require help from parents. This may be one of the reasons behind the bigger achievement gaps in Florida compared to Finland. The students that are not getting help from their home are in a different situation compared to the children with active parents. As the answerers explain in Finland students do not need so much help from parents, instead the students can manage the homework by themselves. The answerers seem to value the stronger co-operation between schools and homes in Florida. They see that parental involvement has an influence on school success in Florida. Parents are required stronger participation for school activities and the schooling of children in Florida. These kinds of actions build and strengthen the relationships between teachers and parents and this eventually leads

towards better communication. The working communication between schools and homes seems to have a positive effect on students' motivation and eventually school success. As the answerers believe and the researches show communication between schools is not working in Finland. For a better school satisfaction and better learning results this social perspective should be considered in the future. (Kiilakoski 2012; Finnish National Board of Education 2007; The Finnish Institute for Educational Research 2014.)



**FIGURE 4.** The main findings of the school success

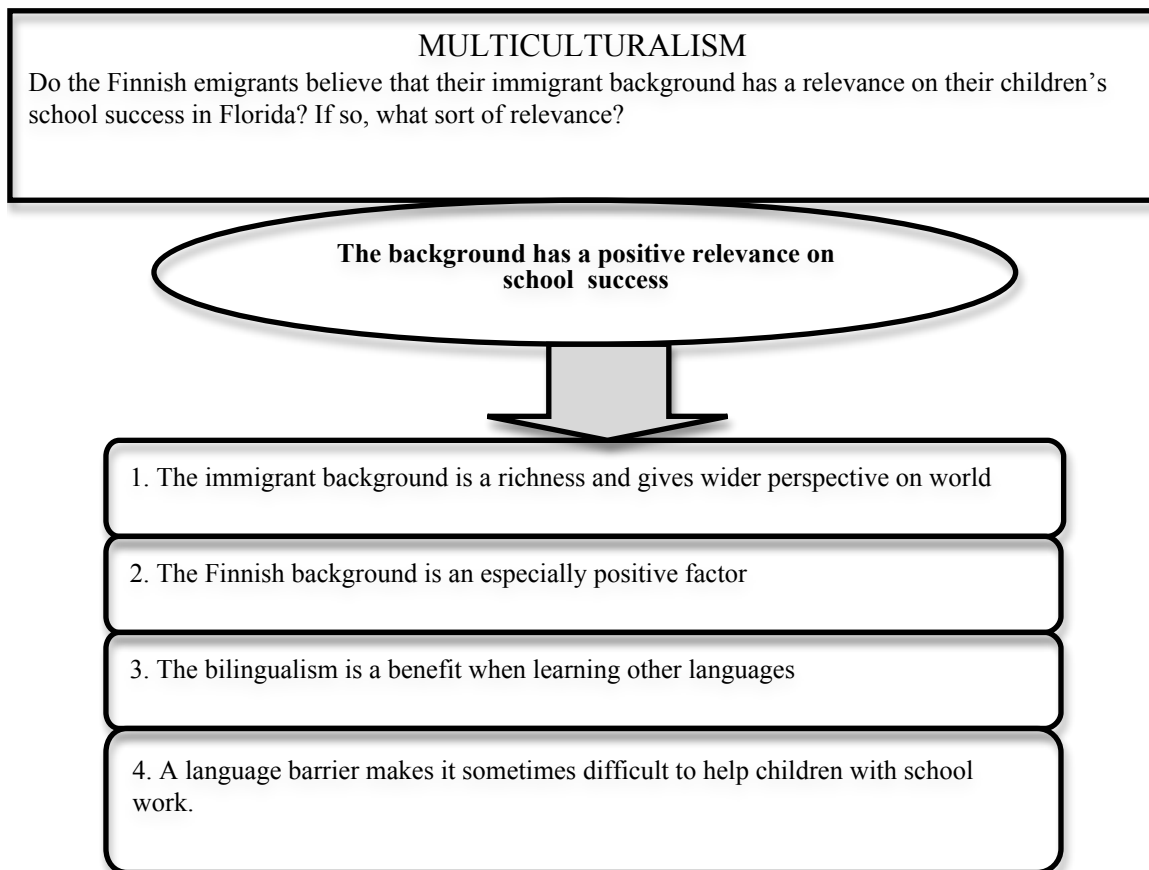
### 7.3 MULTICULTURALISM

Multicultural background is seen as having a positive relevance on school success. Answerers believe that above all the immigrant background is a richness and it gives their children a wider perspective on the world. This has a positive influence on school success, because the children are used to viewing things in different perspectives and therefore they understand better different views and opinions. The research presented earlier is somewhat similar with this finding. Bicultural and immigrant parents tend to be more tolerant than the all-native families. (Virta, Räsänen & Kivirauma 2011.)

The Finnish background is seen particularly valuable for school success. The answerers also explain that Finns tend to succeed well in school compared to other students. Finnish parents in Florida also seem to be taking their children's school success seriously, which leads to suggest that Finnish parents do strongly support their children with their school. Few answerers explain that European children are actually supported better by the parents than for example students with Latino origin. Doctor Diaz (10 January 2014) explains this by the different kind of value on education. European families appreciate education and see that the hard work of studying will pay off in the future. Therefore in many cases European families strongly support their children's schooling.

One of the benefits of multiculturalism is bilingualism. Answerers believe that bilingual background is an advantage when learning new languages. When children speak the majority language only in the school and their mother tongue at home with their family they eventually learn to be fluent with both of the languages. This seems to lead to better academic success. (Nieto 2001.) Mäkinen (27 May 2014) also explains that when the mother tongue is phonological like Finnish language is and the students learn the parallel between a character and phone; it is easier to learn another language after that. However some answerers bring up that when the home language is different than the language used in school, it is sometimes more difficult to help children with their homework. This is especially a huge disadvantage of the children with parents who cannot speak the majority language at all and who are from a whole different culture. (Rinne & Tuittu 2011.) However it seems that by both the answers and research presented it is quite easy to adopt the new culture for Finns in Florida.

The third claim is about how well the answerers themselves feel to suit as a target group for this specific research. The issue to consider here about trustworthiness of the research is that are the answerers a suitable target group for getting reliable answers? As the answerers explain they themselves seem to believe that they are a suitable target group. Most answerers have also studied during the time of comprehensive school in Finland and thus they understand the current Finnish school system. Many answerers also tell that they are in touch with their Finnish friends and relatives and they discuss regularly on schooling in both countries. However the school system is constantly changing and therefore it is possible that some ideas do not fit to this day anymore. That is why the findings are reflected to the theoretical framework and earlier researches presented in this thesis in order to ensure the trustworthiness of this research.



**FIGURE 5.** The main findings about multiculturalism



## 8 CLOSING WORDS

The first research question was: what kind of views do Finnish emigrants have on basic education in Florida compared to their experiences on basic education in Finland? It seems to be clear that in Finland the functional issues of school culture are much more emphasized than in Florida. Healthy school food, recesses, arts and physical education and decent amount of homework and free time are supported and appreciated. These issues are less emphasized in Florida. The social issues however; social activity, parental involvement and free time activities are much more emphasized in Florida when compared to Finland. Finland is actually struggling with the consequences of neglecting these issues.

The second question was: what factors do the emigrants believe to have an influence on school success in Florida compared to their experiences in basic education in Finland? According to the answers some aspects are worldwide and some cultural. The child's own drive for studying and success is one of the factors behind school success that is seen important in every culture. The culture in Florida values more social aspects: social activity and parent involvement. In Finland students are expected more independency. The quality of school varies a lot in Florida by the area where it is located and therefore the success is dependent on the school and teacher the student has. In Finland schools are quite the same quality all around the country.

The cultural context and educational policies determining the educational decisions are from totally different perspectives in these two countries. What seems interesting is that even though there are some opposite opinions still, American policy makers like president Barack Obama seem to be interested in creating more equalitarian school system and at the same time neoliberalistic ideas are getting more and more common in Finnish educational policies. Just like stated earlier not every practice could be adopted in every culture. What comes clear in this research is that we learn that these two cultures and educational policies behind them are quite far from each other. Still there are things that should be taken into serious consideration in both countries in the future. The social concerns in the Finnish school system should be researched even more in order to find suggestions to enhance the social culture in Finnish schools. This includes the issues concerning the student-teacher relationship, co-operation between schools and homes and the peer relationships.

The final research question was: do the emigrants believe that their immigrant background has relevance on their children's school success in Florida? If so, what sort of relevance? Most answerers believe that their multicultural background has a positive influence on their children's school success. The background is seen as a richness and bilingualism as an advantage when

learning new languages. What seems to be clear in the general conversation of multicultural education is that the history has a strong influence to the situation today. People in Finland have been quite isolated from the outside world throughout their history and mostly have minded their own business. Quite peaceful the Finns certainly are and the only ones disturbing their peace have been the neighboring countries. Now immigration is increasing even in this remote country. At the same time Finns are enjoying more and more travelling as one of their favorite leisure time activities. The foreigners are no longer seen as a threat to the country. Nevertheless I admit, that Finland still has its troubles with stances towards immigrants and there is also a clear difference in stances between different age groups. But the situation seems likely to develop.

Multiculturalism is totally a different issue in the huge country of the USA. There is a long and brutal history of disagreements, domination and categorizing people. For many people these historical events are still clearly in mind. Also the amount of population is so incomparably huge. For example the group of Latin minority in the USA is bigger than the whole population of Finland. Nevertheless I believe that the multicultural conversation is developing all the time, slowly but surely.

What I really believe and this research has only strengthened my belief, that professional and broad-minded teachers can create the base for tolerance, complex understanding and critical thinking in schools with a well-functioning co-operation between teachers and parents. When children start school they have not yet gathered strong beliefs and assumptions of the surrounding world and people. Or at least they are still likely to listen, learn and adjust their assumptions by learning and working together with all kinds of people in the same age group. Children are surprisingly adaptable and ready to question what they have already learned. Disagreements and misunderstandings will certainly happen in schools as we all know, but a strong and wise teacher can guide students through these obstacles and help them learn from those all.

Finland does not have the same kind of huge historical burden of discrimination as the USA. Instead Finland is struggling with the high speed of cultural development and needs to speed up in order to keep up with the inevitable change. Thus the issues on hand have totally different perspectives in these two countries. In my personal opinion what both countries need are young, or old, but brave and open-minded educational revolutionaries, who are not too shy to question the old habits, but who are also wise enough to listen and examine other views to recognize what is worth to protect.

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## ANNEX 1. THE SURVEY IN FINNISH

### Suomalaisen ja floridalaisen perusopetuksen eroja

#### Taustatiedot

Mikä on sukupuolenne?

- a) Nainen
- b) Mies

Minkä ikäinen olette?

- a) alle 25 vuotta
- b) 25 - 31 vuotta
- c) 32 - 37 vuotta
- d) 38 - 42 vuotta
- e) 43 - 47 vuotta
- f) 48 - 52 vuotta
- g) 52 vuotta tai enemmän

Kuinka kauan olette asuneet Floridassa?

- a) 0 - 5 vuotta
- b) 6 - 11 vuotta
- c) 12 - 17 vuotta
- d) 18 - 23 vuotta
- e) 24 vuotta tai kauemmin

Onko lapsenne tämänhetkinen koulu:

- a) kindergarten
- b) elementary school
- c) middle school
- d) high school?
- e) Lapseni on/ovat jo päättäneet koulunsa.

Onko lapsenne koulu:

- a) yksityinen
- b) julkinen?

Minä vuosina olette itse käyneet koulua Suomessa ja mitä luokka-asteita?

Minä vuosina lapsenne on/ovat käyneet koulua Floridassa ja mitä luokka-asteita?

## Perusopetuksen käytännön eroja

*Vastaa kysymyksiin mahdollisimman monipuolisesti ja vapaamuotoisesti. Vastaa omien koulukokemustesi pohjalta Suomessa ja lastesi koulukokemusten pohjalta Floridassa. Voit ottaa myös lapsesi mukaan pohtimaan.*

Eroavatko suomalainen ja floridalainen perusopetus seuraavien asioiden suhteen? Jos eroavat niin, miten?

- a) opetettavat oppiaineet
- b) opetusmenetelmät
- c) opetuksen laatu
- d) oppimisen arviointi
- e) muut käytännön asiat

Miten kuvailisit floridalaista perusopetusta (kindergarten, elementary school, middle school, high school) käytännön tasolla (kouluruoka, kuri, kilpailu, koulukuljetukset, kotitehtävät, koulun järjestämä vapaa-ajantoiminta yms.)?

Miten kuvailisit suomalaista perusopetusta (alakoulu/ala-aste, yläkoulu/yläaste) käytännön tasolla (kouluruoka, kuri, kilpailu, koulukuljetukset, kotitehtävät, koulun järjestämä vapaa-ajan toiminta yms.)?

## Koulumenestys

*Vastaa kysymyksiin mahdollisimman monipuolisesti ja vapaamuotoisesti. Vastaa omien koulukokemustesi pohjalta Suomessa ja lastesi koulukokemusten myötä Floridassa. Voit ottaa myös lapsesi mukaan pohtimaan.*

Millä asioilla koet olevan merkitystä koulumenestykseen Floridassa? Koulumenestyksellä tarkoitetaan tässä esimerkiksi arvosanoja, oppimistuloksia, kouluviihtyvyyttä sekä sosiaalisten suhteiden toimivuutta.

Millä asioilla koet olevan merkitystä koulumenestykseen Suomessa? Koulumenestyksellä tarkoitetaan tässä esimerkiksi arvosanoja, oppimistuloksia, kouluviihtyvyyttä sekä sosiaalisten suhteiden toimivuutta.

## Monikulttuurisuus

*Esitä näkemyksesi seuraaviin väittämiin.*

Toisesta maasta/kulttuurista muuttamisella ei ole mitään merkitystä lasteni koulumenestykseen.

Toisesta maasta/kulttuurista muuttaneena pystyn vertailemaan suomalaisen ja floridalaisen perusopetuksen eroja erilaisesta näkökulmasta kuin vain yhdessä maassa/kulttuurissa asunut henkilö.

***Kiitos arvokkaista vastauksistasi!***

## ANNEX 2. THE SURVEY IN ENGLISH

### Educational differences between Finland and Florida

#### Basic Information

Gender:

- a) Female
- b) Male

Your Age:

- a) under 20 years
- b) 21- 25 years
- c) 26 - 30 years
- d) 31 - 35 years
- e) over 35 years

How long did you live/have you lived in Florida?

How long did you live/have you lived in Finland?

Was your school/schools in Florida public or private?

During which years did you go to school in Finland and which grades?

#### Differences of basic education on practical level

*Please answer the questions as widely as possible in your own words. In this study the term basic education is defined by the following educational institutes in Florida: kindergarten, elementary school, middle school and high school and in Finland: esikoulu, ala-aste/alakoulu, yläaste/yläkoulu.*

Do Finnish and Florida basic education differ by the things mentioned below? If they do, how?

- a) the subjects taught in schools
- b) teaching methods
- c) quality of teaching
- d) evaluation of learning
- e) other practical things

How would you describe Florida basic education on practical level (schoolfood, discipline, competition, school transportation, homework, school organized free time activities etc.)?

How would you describe Finnish basic education on practical level (schoolfood, discipline, competition, school transportation, homework, school organized free time activities etc.)?

## School Success

*In this study the term school success means for example grades, learning results, how enjoyable is the schoolday in general and how well the social relationships are working in school.*

What things do you think have an influence on school success in Florida?

What things do you think have an influence on school success in Finland?

## Multiculturalism

*What is your opinion on following claims?*

The fact, that I'm originally from another culture or country does not have any influence on my school success.

As a person having lived in two countries or cultures I am able to compare the differences in Finnish and Florida basic education in a different perspective than a person who has lived in only one culture or country.

***Thank you for your valuable answers!***



## **ANNEX 3. THE BASE FOR THE INTERVIEW IN ENGLISH**

### **School System**

- Public, private and charter schools? Correct? What else?
- How are they funded?
- Grants? Funds?
- Testing e.g. FCAT -> based on curriculum?
- What kind of pupils end up and where? Does the area matter?
- Where do the teachers want to teach? Is it dependent on the area where the school exists or the fact that the school is public or private?

### **Curriculum**

- What sort of curricula there are? Are they local concerning for example each school district? Are there curricula for each school?
- Who decides what needs to be studied?
- Are the curricula mandatory or voluntary?
- Is some level supervising the curriculum work and how it is put into effect?

### **Teacher education**

(kindergarten, elementary school, middle school)

- Do teachers study in a university? In a college?
- How long do they study to be a teacher?
- Who can teach?
- What do they study?
- Can curriculum of the teacher education be approached somewhere?

### **Multiculturalism**

- Huge variety of different backgrounds in Florida:
  - > Statistics?
  - > What influence it has on schools?
  - > How are the different multicultural backgrounds taken into consideration in teaching and in curriculum work?
  - > What kind of support is given to pupils?
  - > Are there differences on school success between pupils from different cultural backgrounds?

## **ANNEX 4. THE BASE FOR THE INTERVIEW IN FINNISH**

### **Koulujärjestelmä**

- Julkiset ja yksityiset koulut?
- Kuinka koulutus rahoitetaan?
- Kuinka kouluissa arvioidaan ja/tai testataan? Perustuuko testaus ja arviointi opetussuunnitelmaan?
- Missä opettajat haluavat opettaa? Onko alueiden välillä eroa?

### **Opetussuunnitelma**

- Minkälaisia opetussuunnitelmia Suomessa on käytössä? Paikallisia, kunnallisia, valtakunnallisia?
- Kuka päättää, mitä kouluissa opiskellaan?
- Ovatko opetussuunnitelmat pakollisia vai vapaaehtoisia?
- Tarkkaileeko jokin taho opetussuunnitelmatyötä ja sitä, toteutuuko se käytännössä?

### **Opettajankoulutus**

- Opiskelevatko opettajat yliopistossa?
- Kuinka kauan kestää opiskella opettajaksi?
- Kuka saa opettaa kouluissa?
- Mitä opettajankoulutuksessa opiskellaan?
- Onko opettajankoulutuksen opetussuunnitelma yleisesti luettavissa?

### **Monikulttuurisuus**

- Kuinka yleistä monikulttuurisuus on Suomen kouluissa? Miltä tulevaisuus näyttää?
- Kuinka monikulttuurisuus vaikuttaa koulutyöhön?
  - Miten erilaiset monikulttuuriset taustat otetaan huomioon opetuksessa ja opetussuunnitelmatyössä?
  - Minkälaista tukea monikulttuuriset oppilaat saavat opintoihinsa?
  - Onko havaittavissa eroja oppilaiden välillä, jotka ovat lähtöisin eri kulttuurisista taustoista?